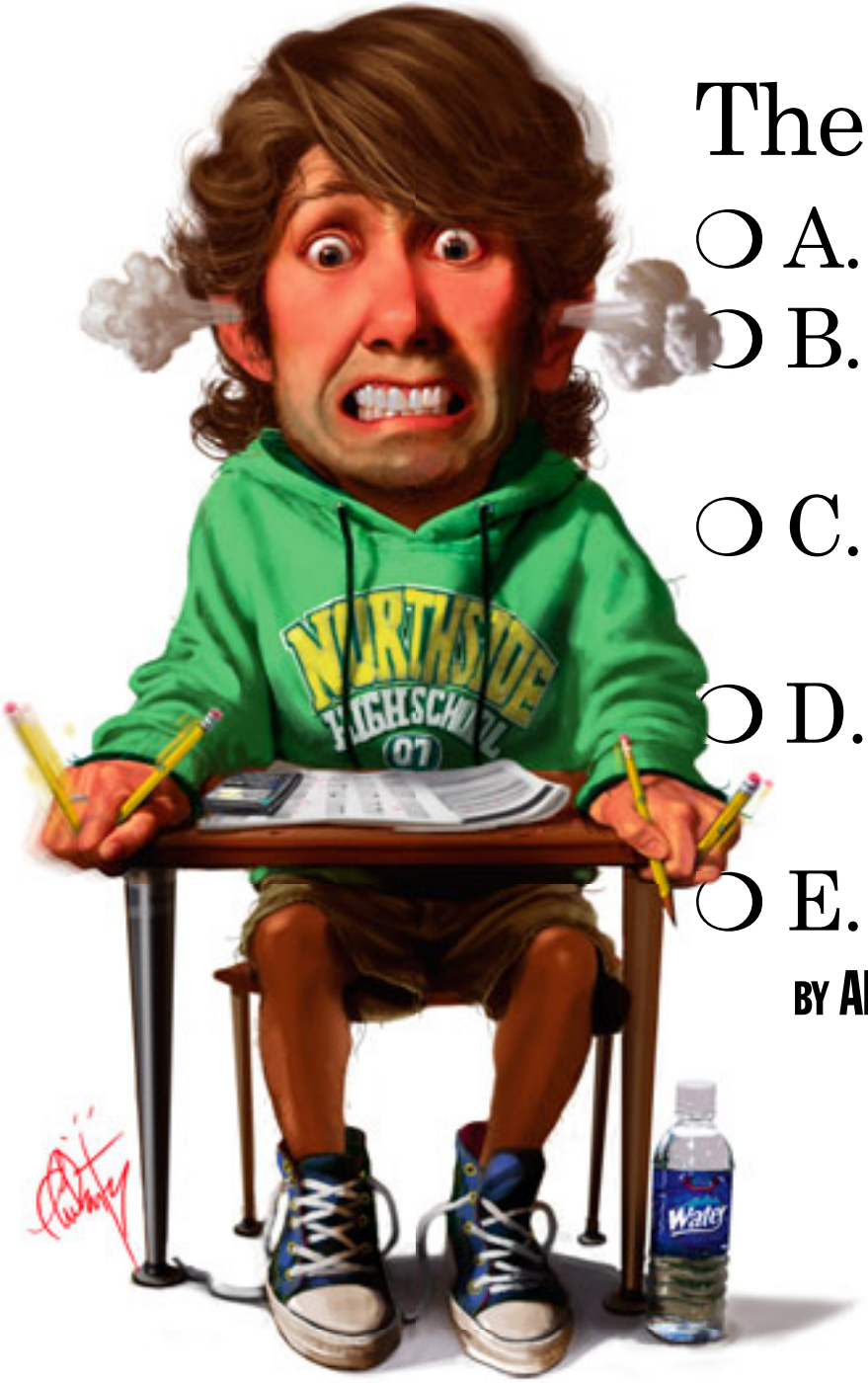
the weekly
Standard

MAY 4, 2009 $4.95

OBAMA & THE CIA
NOEMIE EMERY • REUEL MARC GERECHT
STEPHEN F. HAYES • WILLIAM KRISTOL



The SAT is:

- ❍ A. a cynical hoax
- ❍ B. a blunt but useful tool
- ❍ C. a triumph of social science
- ❍ D. a source of needless panic
- ❍ E. all of the above

BY ANDREW FERGUSON

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Training is what keeps people moving forward. And that goes for grownups too.

With new technologies, products and services being introduced at lightning speed, Verizon Wireless understands the importance of making sure our employees know the latest innovations inside and out.

So we offer a variety of training programs that give our employees an opportunity to turn a job into a career—one that's totally focused on our customers.

That's who we are at Verizon Wireless. That's what keeps us leading the way to tomorrow. *Our People. Our Network.*

www.vzw-whoweare.com

verizon wireless

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG

Join us—and our special guests

OBAMA STIMULUS EFFECT: NEW, LOWER PRICES!

THE WEEKLY STANDARD cruises the Mediterranean August 7-17, 2009 aboard Holland America's luxury liner, *Noordam*.

Join us for ten days of the best conversation about politics at home and abroad with Bill Kristol, Fred Barnes, Terry Eastland, and Richard Starr. Also on board will be our special guests: **Elliott Abrams,** Deputy National Security Advisor in the Bush White House, where he covered Iran, Israel, and the Middle East; & **Anne-Elisabeth Moutet,** the Paris-based political journalist and contributor to the BBC.

President Obama: A uniter or a divider?

2010: A GOP comeback, or will Republicans lose more seats?

The courts: Can the rule of law survive the Obama judiciary?

The United States: In deeper peril than we know, or will things get better?

The World: Assessing Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran

The Weekly Standard: the best magazine ever, or what!

Call *1-800-266-4043* or visit *www.twscruise.com*

THE CRUISE AUTHORITY

Holland America Line

the weekly Standard

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Everybody in the pool.

THE FEDERAL REGULATORY OVERHAUL SHOULD INCLUDE THE ENTIRE FINANCIAL INDUSTRY.

The time to save America's economic future from drowning is now. **To do it thoroughly and effectively, we need bold federal regulatory reform for the *entire* financial industry.** As an active member of that industry, Allstate has a few ideas to keep our country afloat:

1. COOPERATE

The entire financial system—banks, hedge funds, credit rating agencies, regulators, investment banks, insurance companies and more—is intertwined and interlinked. We must work together to understand the risks and solve the issues. **No one can be left out of the solution, or it won't be a solution.**

2. BE TRANSPARENT

Clarity is key. Only when there is transparency around valuing the risk in the financial system—including the role of insurance to help mitigate that risk—will we regain confidence in the economy. And only when we streamline and simplify financial information will consumers be able to make truly informed choices.

3. REINVENT

Congress must design federal regulation for the 21st century. It's time to replace the patchwork of regulation coming from countless state and federal agencies with one simple set of rules to oversee all financial businesses—those that pose systemic risk and those that don't.

Let's draft strong, clear federal regulation to protect our country from this ever happening again. With everyone swimming in the same pool, we can be real agents of change. **Go to allstate.com/fedreg.**

America's economic future needs to be better protected. That's Allstate's Stand.

Allstate®
You're in good hands.

Auto
Home
Life
Retirement

The Cupped Hands logo is a registered service mark and "That's Allstate's Stand" is a service mark of Allstate Insurance Company, Northbrook, IL. © 2009 Allstate Insurance Company

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contents

May 4, 2009 • Volume 14, Number 31

2 Scrapbook ..... *AIG's Fables*

4 Casual ..... *Philip Terzian, naysayer*

5 Editorial ..... *William Kristol • Noemie Emery*

Articles

8 Cheney vs. Obama *The CIA interrogation debate is joined* ..... BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

10 So Far, So Good? *Only 1,361 days to go* ..... BY FRED BARNES

11 Pragmatism Obama Style *Surprise, it's left-wing* ..... BY PETER BERKOWITZ

13 The Real Bipartisanship *Frank Wolf, Jim Cooper, and colleagues target entitlements* ..... BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

15 Bring Him His Machine Gun *Meet South Africa's new president* ..... BY JAMES KIRCHICK

16 Spy Mystery Solved *His name was Wynn. Arthur Wynn.* ..... BY JOHN EARL HAYNES, HARVEY KLEHR & ALEXANDER VASSILIEV

Cover: Thomas Fluharty

Features

18 The SAT and Its Enemies ..... BY ANDREW FERGUSON
Fear and loathing in college admissions.

28 What Was the CIA Up To? ..... BY REUEL MARC GERECHT
Obama should release the intelligence gained from the interrogations.

Books & Arts

32 The Man Within *Graham Greene and his correspondence* ..... BY MICHAEL DIRDA

35 Better Off *The mismeasurement of wealth and poverty in America* ..... BY JOEL SCHWARTZ

37 'Laugh Yourself Fat' *Rediscovering the comic superstar of the Depression* ..... BY HELEN RITTELMEYER

39 Pre-Camelot *History has undermined the verdict of 1960* ..... BY STEPHEN HESS

40 Dr. Franklin's Remedy *Improvement, not transformation, in a practical world* ..... BY JAMES SEATON

42 Well Bred, Well Fed . . . *Had Cheever invented an Episcopal bishop, he would have been Paul Moore* ..... BY MARK TOOLEY

44 Parody ..... *Obama's New Interrogation Tactics*

William Kristol, *Editor* **Fred Barnes,** *Executive Editor*
Richard Starr, *Deputy Editor* **Claudia Anderson,** *Managing Editor*
Christopher Caldwell, Andrew Ferguson, Robert Messenger, *Senior Editors* **Philip Terzian,** *Literary Editor*
Stephen F. Hayes, Matt Labash, *Senior Writers* **Victorino Matus,** *Assistant Managing Editor*
Matthew Continetti, *Associate Editor* **Mary Katharine Ham, Jonathan V. Last,** *Staff Writers* **Michael Goldfarb,** *Online Editor*
Kari Barbic, Katherine Eastland, *Assistant Editors* **John McCormack, Samantha Sault,** *Deputy Online Editors* **Kevin Vance,** *Editorial Assistant*
Philip Chalk, *Design Director* **Carolyn Wimmer,** *Executive Assistant* **Kristina Baker,** *Design Assistant*
Max Boot, Joseph Bottum, Tucker Carlson, Noemie Emery, Joseph Epstein, David Frum, David Gelernter, Reuel Marc Gerecht, Brit Hume, Frederick W. Kagan, Robert Kagan, Charles Krauthammer, Tod Lindberg, P.J. O'Rourke, John Podhoretz, Irwin M. Stelzer, *Contributing Editors*

Terry Eastland, *Publisher*
Peter Dunn, *Associate Publisher* **Nicholas H.B. Swezey,** *Advertising Director* **Catherine Lowe,** *Marketing Director*
Robert Dodd, *Canada Manager* **Don Eugenio,** *Midwest Manager* **Melissa Garnier,** *Canada Manager (Montreal)* **Perry Janoski,** *Book Publishing Manager*
Catherine Daniel, *Advertising & Marketing Manager* **Mairead Cagney,** *Accounting Director* **Patricia Lachapelle,** *Senior Accountant*
Taybor Cook, *Office Manager* **Andrew Kaumeier,** *Staff Assistant*

Advertising inquiries: *Please call* ***202-293-4900*** *or visit* ***www.weeklystandard.com/advertising***

the weekly Standard

The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of News America Incorporated, is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, second week in July, and fourth week in August) at 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington D.C. 20036. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 50108, Boulder, CO 80322-0108. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 50108, Boulder, CO 80322-0108. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-850-682-7644 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, $4.95. Back issues, $4.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036. Copyright 2009, News America Incorporated. All rights reserved. No material in The Weekly Standard may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. The Weekly Standard is a registered trademark of News America Incorporated.

BPA INTERNATIONAL

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AIG's Fables

Roving SCRAPBOOK correspondent P.J. O'Rourke sends us the charming pamphlet whose cover is depicted here. It was published by the troubled insurance giant AIG in happier days (copyright 2000). In retrospect, it's clear that the heedless, live-for-today, merrymaking grasshopper in the drawing represents AIG, and the rapacious fox the credit default swap debacle.

Writes P.J.: "This pamphlet was pressed into my hand after a speech I gave by a fellow trying to fan the flames of economic populism, no doubt. I—on the other hand—think AIG was spending its money well. Pity the AIG executives didn't read it."

Of the six Aesop fables in the booklet, P.J. commends especially "The Mermaid and the Woodcutter," in which a woodcutter loses his axe in a pool of water. A mermaid comes to the surface with axes of gold and silver. The woodcutter tells her they don't belong to him; his was "an old, worn iron axe." She rewards him for his honesty by giving him all three axes. His brother the next day says to himself, "I'll try the same trick, and I'll come home wealthy, too!" He throws his axe into the water; the mermaid surfaces with a golden one and asks: "Is this the one you lost?" "That's the one!" he lies—at which point she drops it back into the depths, saying, "For your dishonesty, you'll have no axe at all." Moral: Honesty is the best policy.

Our favorite, though, is the fabulous tale told on the back cover: "Regardless of age, life's financial lessons should be easy to understand. As children, you relied on parents for guidance and insight. As parents, you can rely on us. . . . With assets that exceed $600 billion, we clearly have more to share than just a wealth of experience. We have financial strength. The moral of this story? We know money."

The real moral turns out to be hidden in plain view on the cover: Never trust strangers claiming to do something "for your children." ♦

Izzy? Yes, He Is.

Anyone who has ever opened a book published by the PublicAffairs press will find a dedication page written by its founder, Peter Osnos. He recognizes "three persons who have served as mentors to countless reporters, writers, editors, and book people of all kinds, including me." And first on the list is I.F. Stone (1907-1989),

> proprietor of *I.F. Stone's Weekly*, [who] combined a commitment to the First Amendment with entrepreneurial zeal and reporting skill and became one of the great independent journalists in American history . . .

Well, not so "independent" as his admirers might have thought. Since his death 20 years ago there has been a presumption that Stone was, apart from being a hero to the old Stalinist left and a cult figure among Vietnam-era radicals, a onetime Soviet agent. This was based on the testimony of an ex-KGB man named Oleg Kalugin who, after the fall of the Soviet Union, described his contacts with Stone to a British journalist.

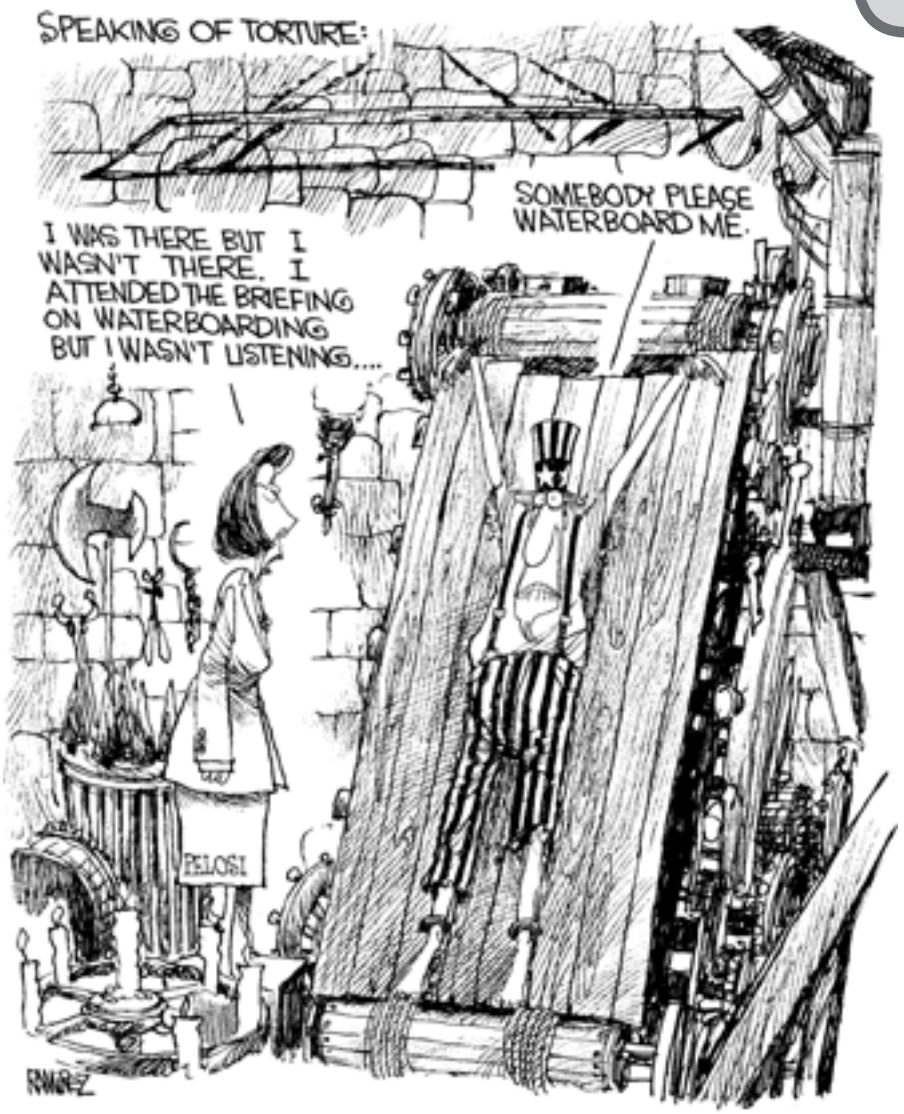
As is often the case in these instances, there was a certain ambiguity in Kalugin's account, and the complaint against Stone has never been thoroughly researched and examined—until now. With the imminent publication of *Spies: The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America* by John Earl Haynes, Harvey Klehr, and Alexander Vassiliev (see their piece on a related subject on page 16), the case against Stone is made, chapter and verse, based on a close examination of new evidence from the Soviet archives, and other related documents. Haynes and Klehr are the preeminent scholars of declassified Soviet intelligence, and Vassiliev is a distinguished Russian journalist and historian of espionage.

This revelation comes as no great shock to THE SCRAPBOOK—the beloved "Izzy" Stone, after all, was the author of the classic *Hidden History of the Korean War* (1952), which explains that the Korean War began when the *South* Koreans invaded *North* Korea, just as Stalin said they had—but the left is especially reluctant to part with its illusions, and the myth of I.F. Stone is no exception.

Take angry independent journalist Eric Alterman, for example, who writes on an Internet site about references in the KGB archives to Stone assisting "Soviet intelligence on a number of such tasks: talent-spotting, acting as a courier by relaying information to other agents, and providing private journalistic tidbits and data the KGB found interesting."

This is an outrage, he exclaims.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



> First off, none of those activities comport with my . . . definition of the word "spy." Stone did not obtain any secret information of any kind, nor even any government information of any kind, much less that related to military or naval affairs.

Which, The Scrapbook concedes, is true—so far as we know. All I.F. Stone did was appear on the Kremlin payroll between 1936 and 1939—we still don't know if subsequent efforts to enlist his services succeeded or not—and secretly carry information from one Soviet spy to another, provide helpful material to his contact agents, and recruit other people to enlist as Communist spies.

Of course, none of this damning information may coincide with Comrade Alterman's "definition of the word 'spy'"—there is no evidence that Stone drove an Aston Martin, wore a trench coat in all weather, or preferred his martinis shaken, not stirred—but it sure sounds like espionage to The Scrapbook.

Then again, it must be difficult to come to terms with the awful truth about someone so consistently lionized on the left as the late Soviet agent I.F. Stone. "Stone and I were close friends during the final decade or so of his life," Alterman writes, "and he never mentioned anything of this to me."

Imagine! ♦

Sentences We Didn't Finish

'Why did Spitzer do it? Because . . . he could not help himself. He spent his life on the run, always achieving, always working, always impressing, and the engine that drove him to the highest levels of politics could not simply be turned off when the hotel-room door closed. He understood he was doing something wrong, and he knew the price he could pay. . . . But hubristically, yet all too humanly, he lost control. 'I thought we could handle it, and we did for a while,' he says. 'And then . . . '" (Jon Meacham, *Newsweek*, April 27). ♦

He Puts Us to Sleep, Too, Larry

CHIP SOMODEVILLA / GETTY IMAGES

Top White House economic adviser Larry Summers listens to President Obama at an April 23 meeting with executives of the U.S. credit card industry.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Casual

Simon Says: Buy This

If there is to be a reaction against Susan Boyle, let it begin here.

Of course, if you have been unconscious for the past week or two, you might be unaware of her existence. The homely 47-year-old Scottish spinster—who has never been kissed or held a job but wants to be a "professional singer"—is a contestant on *Britain's Got Talent*, and a video of her rendition of "I Dreamed a Dream" from *Les Misérables* has transformed her into a global sensation.

Are you one of the 27 million people who have seen the video on YouTube? Shy, frumpy, frizz-haired Miss Boyle ambles onstage, and a faintly impatient, condescending Simon Cowell interrogates her. She wants to be a singer, she says, and models herself on Elaine Paige, a popular English performer who specializes in Andrew Lloyd Webber anthems. Cowell appears to roll his eyes at her presumption, and the jaded audience barely suppresses its laughter.

Then Miss Boyle cues the music, takes a deep breath—and history is made. Her voice is clear, her notes are true, and she barely finishes her first line (*I dreamed a dream in time gone by*) before the theater erupts in thunderous cheers and applause and a standing ovation. Simon and his fellow judges are clearly abashed, and delighted: "Without a doubt," says Piers Morgan, "that was the biggest surprise I have had in three years of this show."

Don't get me wrong: I have nothing against Susan Boyle, and wish her the best. But please excuse me for thinking that there's something a little too perfect about this episode: The bashful gargoyle with the voice of an angel; the hostile audience that's transformed into mush; the dreams of the world's ugly ducklings come true; even the theme of the godawful song (*I had a dream my life would be / So different from this hell I'm living*) appears scripted.

No one can argue that Simon Cowell isn't a master showman, even willing to humiliate himself to manipulate his audience. The ratings for *Britain's Got Talent* will be nearly as impressive as the sales figures for Susan Boyle's first CD. Better yet, the old and new media are now earnestly debating whether our celebrity culture is too shallow to recognize genuine talent in plain wrapping or exclaiming how Susan Boyle's triumph has given hope to discouraged dreamers out there.

To which I say: Gag me with a spoon.

To begin with, strictly speaking, Susan Boyle has a nice voice, and can carry a tune on live television before a huge audience—no minor skill. But it isn't a great voice—she warbles at strategic moments, and fades out here and there—and no better than the voices of thousands of singers on school stages or in local theaters and clubs.

While it's an effective device to emphasize the contrast between the look and sound of Susan Boyle, it isn't quite as significant as all that. In the long history of show biz there is no clear correlation between beauty and success among singers—or among performers generally, for that matter. There are good-looking singers who aren't taken very seriously and unprepossessing superstars of stage and screen. For decades the most popular singer in America was Kate Smith, who looked like a football lineman; and the greatest jazz singer of the age, Ella Fitzgerald, was nobody's idea of a sexpot. Both of them came of age in the radio era, to be sure, but both thrived into the video age as well.

In point of fact, if Susan Boyle reminds me of anyone, it is Elva Miller (1907-97)—"Mrs. Miller" to her legion of fans—another unconventional song stylist who made a brief appearance in American popular culture in the late 1960s. They even bear a certain resemblance to one another.

The difference, of course, is that Susan Boyle is an incontestably better singer, and Mrs. Miller emerged in a very different time and place. A California housewife in late middle age who liked to sing for long-suffering friends and neighbors, Mrs. Miller sang badly, not unexpectedly well—and that being an infinitely crueler age than ours, she wasn't in on the joke.

As readers might have guessed, I possess her lone bestselling LP, "Mrs. Miller's Greatest Hits," and settled in the other evening to reminisce. Whereas Susan Boyle can be pleasant to listen to, Mrs. Miller was excruciating: Wobbly, off-key, always a half-beat behind the orchestra, the effect was accentuated by her singing hip numbers of the day ("Downtown," "Monday, Monday") that she barely comprehended. As was said in those days, she was so bad she was good.

People who think that we've lost our innocence as Americans should compare the career of Elva Miller—she never understood her novelty, and spent the balance of her life making "serious" recordings—with our naïve embrace of the Susan Boyle story.

Philip Terzian

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the weekly Standard

Preening & Posturing

"We have been through a dark and painful chapter in our history," President Obama said when he ordered the release of the Justice Department interrogation memos. Actually, no. Not at all. We were attacked on 9/11. We responded to that attack with remarkable restraint in the use of force, respect for civil liberties, and even solicitude for those who might inadvertently be offended, let alone harmed, by our policies. We've fought a war on jihadist terror in a civilized, even legalized, way. Those who have been on the front and rear lines of that war—in the military and the intelligence agencies, at the Justice Department and, yes, in the White House—have much to be proud of. The rest of us, who've been asked to do little, should be grateful.

The dark and painful chapter we have to fear is rather the one President Obama may be ushering in. This would be a chapter in which politicians preen moralistically as they throw patriotic officials, who helped keep this country safe, to the wolves, and in which national leaders posture politically while endangering the nation's security.

The preening is ridiculous, even by the standards of contemporary American politics and American liberalism. Obama fatuously asserts there are no real choices in the real world, just "false choices" that he can magically resolve. He foolishly suggests that even in war we would never have to do anything disagreeable for the sake of our security. He talks baby talk to intelligence officers: "Don't be discouraged that we have to acknowledge potentially we've made some mistakes. That's how we learn."

At the same time, Obama throws the door open to years of lawsuits and investigations that will do injustice to those who've served the country and will demoralize those still seeking to do so. As the *Washington Post*'s David Ignatius, no defender of the Bush administration, put it, "Obama seems to think he can have it both ways—authorizing an unprecedented disclosure of CIA operational methods and at the same time galvanizing a clandestine service whose best days, he told them Monday, are 'yet to come.' Life doesn't work that way—even for charismatic politicians. Disclosure of the torture memos may have been necessary, as part of an overdue campaign to change America's image in the world. But nobody should pretend that the disclosures weren't costly to CIA morale and effectiveness."

Meanwhile, Obama's director of national intelligence, Dennis Blair, acknowledges to his colleagues in the intelligence community that the coercive interrogation methods outlawed by his boss did, in fact, produce "high value information" and "provided a deeper understanding of the al Qaeda organization that was attacking this country." But, as part of the attempted infantilization of our public discourse, the DNI's conclusions about the results of coercive interrogations—in effect, that they worked—are removed from the public version of his statement.

And, Blair piously insists, "I like to think I would not have approved those methods in the past." Why not? Because while "the information gained from these techniques was valuable in some instances . . . there is no way of knowing whether the same information could have been obtained through other means. The bottom line is these techniques have hurt our image around the world, the damage they have done to our interests far outweighed whatever benefit they gave us, and they are not essential to our national security."

Really? The damage "far outweighed" the benefits? Is this based on any analysis or argument? None that we've been offered.

So we appear to have a director of national intelligence whose moral vanity and political pliability lead him to make unsupported, indeed preposterous, assertions with a straight face. As Michael Hayden, the nonpartisan former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, said last weekend, "the use of these techniques against these terrorists made us safer. It really did work." Now the Obama administration has forgone those techniques (and denounced their prior use) because it would like to think we don't need them.

Blair likes to think he wouldn't have authorized the enhanced interrogation techniques. We like to think it was an awfully good thing we didn't have Blair or his boss, President Obama, in charge of our national security over the last several years. We very much hope the nation pays no price for the vanity and sophistry the Obama administration is bringing to Washington. Even so, it is a dark and painful chapter in our history to have as our leaders men who, however inadvertently, make mock of the efforts of the tough and brave Americans who guard us while we sleep.

—*William Kristol*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Telling the Truth

Some Democrats, from the White House on down, are pushing the idea of a "truth commission," à la South Africa, to deal with the "harsh measures" used by the Bush administration in interrogating al Qaeda detainees. Good. Let's have lots of truthtelling. Please bring it on.

Let's tell the truth about Bush's conduct of the war on terror, which is that it's been a success. His ultimate legacy hasn't been written—Iraq is improved, but not out of danger—but the one thing that can be said without reservation is that the country was kept safe. He delivered on the main charge of his office in time of emergency, in a crisis without guidelines or precedent. Attacks took place in Spain, and in London, in Indonesia and India, but not on American soil, which was the obvious target of choice. Bush couldn't say this before he left office, for obvious reasons, and after he left, attention switched to the new president. This little fact dropped down the memory hole, but with all this discussion, it will rise to the surface. Let the hearings begin!

Also dropped down the memory hole—along with the names of all the Democrats who thought Saddam was a menace who cried out for removal—is what the ambience was like in late 2001 and 2002, when fears of anthrax and suitcase bombs ran rampant, and people on all sides tried to seem tough. Let's tell the truth about all the liberals who went on record supporting *real* torture, not to mention the Democrats in Congress, when it was cool to want to seem tough on our enemies, who couldn't be too warlike. Then war and tough measures stopped being cool, and "world opinion" became more important. Nothing like statements under oath to revive ancient memories! And rewind the tapes.

Let's get at the truth too about the word "torture," which to different people, means different things. Some think "torture" means standing on the 98th floor of a burning skyscraper and realizing you have a choice between jumping and being incinerated. Some think torture is being crushed when a building implodes around you. Some think torture is not thinking you might drown for several minutes, but looking at burning buildings on television and knowing that people you love are inside them. They remember that being crushed, incinerated, or killed in a jump from the 98th story happened to almost 3,000 blameless Americans (as well as a number of foreigners), and that 125 Pentagon employees were killed at their desks, while many survivors suffered terrible burns. They think the choice between stopping this from happening again by slapping around or scaring the hell out of a cluster of brigands, or leaving the brigands alone and letting it happen again, is a no-brainer.

Not much polling has been done to date about attitudes on waterboarding and torture held by the general public (as opposed to MoveOn.org and the Washington press corps), but it would surely be done in the event of hearings and trials. Not many people think being slapped hard is the same thing as having to jump from a building. Democrats might find the truth about this to be inconvenient indeed.

Let's get at the truth, not merely about the administration before this one, but of all of the ones that came before that. If we prosecute people in government who try to save American lives by doing "harsh" things to America's enemies, why should we stop at 2001? There's President Truman, who dropped two atomic bombs on Japan, killing and injuring tens of thousands of innocent people. Impeach him in retrospect, for the women and children. Talk about harsh. Go back before him, and impeach FDR: Without him, there would have been no Manhattan Project, specifically conceived to be "harsh" on the enemy. And why stop with them? There's Ike, and John Kennedy, who were in the armed forces, and certainly meant to cause harm to the enemy. They were all, of course, much too "harsh" to be president. Good liberals ought to be troubled by that.

And talk about troubled, let's tell the truth about a common assumption of America's leaders, till now. In war, they tried to minimize casualties, but they put the survival of their people and allies above the comfort and ease of aggressors and enemies. Truman dropped the bomb because it was his duty to save the Allied and American servicemen who would have died or been wounded in the fight for the Japanese homeland. Perhaps if another September 11 occurs because "harsh" methods are dropped from the repertoire, Senator Patrick Leahy might want to visit the victims' survivors and explain that their relatives are no longer with us because of his passion for the good opinion of the rest of mankind.

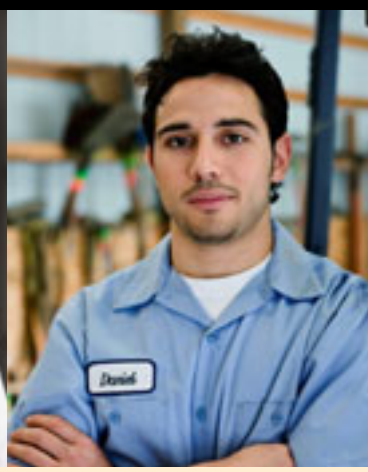
Barack Obama promised to be a nontraditional leader, and in some ways he is. He is the first president to have gone abroad and apologized so much for his country's supposed sins, the first to sit calmly by while his country was savaged by the likes of Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega without making a protest, the first to try to persecute a past administration for its political judgments, and the first to investigate a predecessor and his administration for having been a success.

The first job of a president is to safeguard his country and fellow citizens, which Bush did, to the apparent dismay of the opposition. Usually, an investigation takes place after someone has failed in his duty, to find out what went wrong so that it can be changed and improved on. But no attacks on U.S. soil in the seven-plus years between September 11, 2001, and January 20, 2009, is a record of success. Do the Democrats want to find out what went right, and then change it, to avoid repetition? The way that they're going, they probably will.

—*Noemie Emery*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Guess who'll pay for new energy taxes...



Raising taxes in a recession jeopardizes jobs and economic recovery

Congress will soon consider new taxes on America's oil and natural gas industry. These new energy taxes will produce wide-reaching effects, and ripple through our economy when America – and Americans – can least afford it.

These unprecedented taxes will serve to reduce investment in new energy supplies at a time when nearly two-thirds of Americans support developing our domestic oil and natural gas resources. That means less energy, thousands of American jobs being lost and further erosion of our energy security.

Our economy is in crisis, and we need to get the nation on the road to economic recovery. This is no time to burden Americans with new energy costs.

THE *people* OF AMERICA'S OIL AND NATURAL GAS INDUSTRY

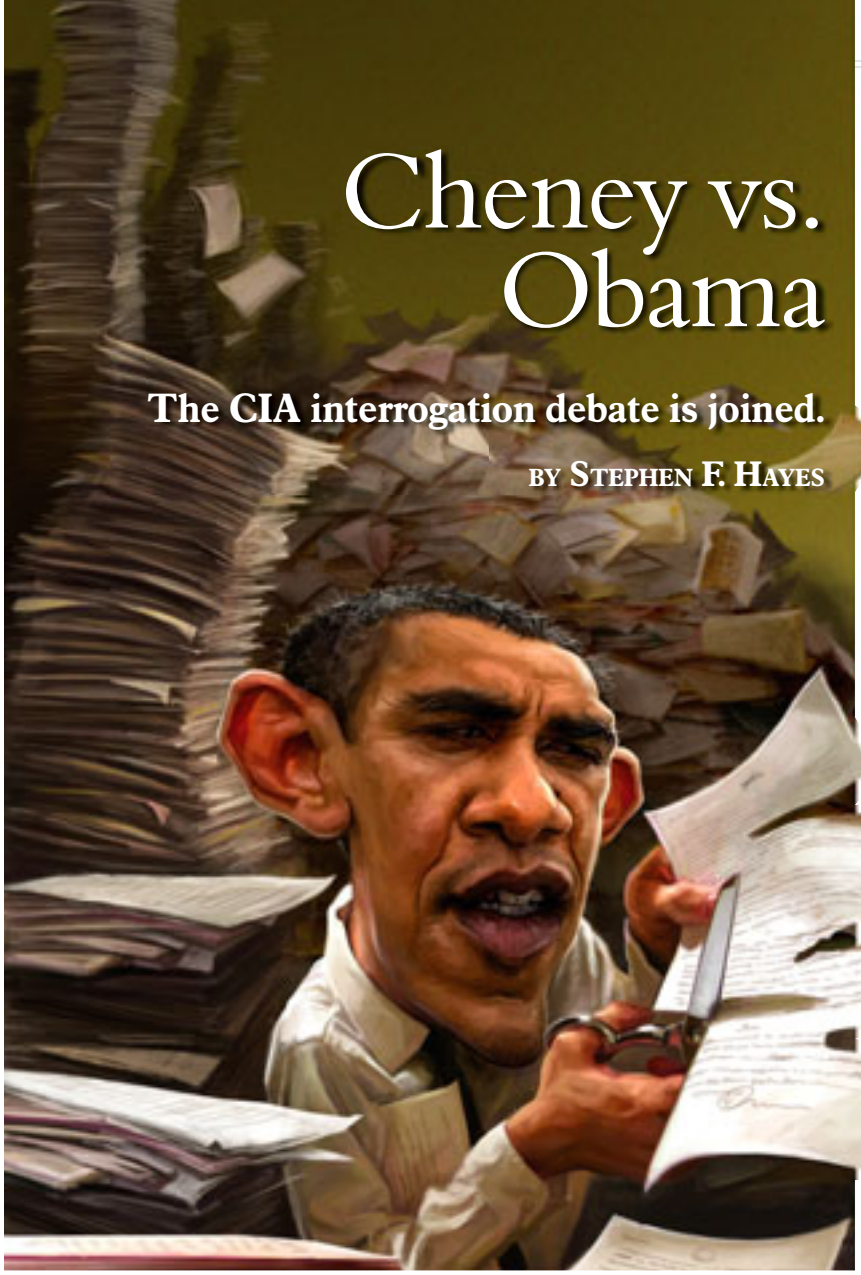
Find out what you can do at EnergyTomorrow.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cheney vs. Obama

The CIA interrogation debate is joined.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES



JASON SEILER

The Obama administration is confused.

The president says harsh interrogation techniques "do not make us safer," but his top intelligence adviser says the same techniques produced "high-value information" that gave the U.S. government "a deeper understanding of the al Qaeda organization that was attacking this country."

Obama White House officials routinely boast that theirs is "the most transparent administration in history," but then they release Justice Department memos about the interrogations in which the assessments confirming the value of those techniques are blacked out.

Attorney General Eric Holder tells a congressional committee that he is unaware of memos about the information gleaned in harsh interrogations that have been requested by former Vice President Dick Cheney, but his boss, the president, not only knows about those memos but also describes their contents to members of Congress.

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs says the administration could support an independent investigation of interrogation techniques based on the 9/11 Commission. Then he says that Obama decided long ago that such an investigation would be too political.

Such evidence of confusion is abundant. But nowhere is it more pronounced than on the question of possible criminal prosecutions related to coercive interrogations. Administration officials, including the president, have gone out of their way to leave open the possibility of prosecuting those responsible for the interrogation techniques.

Holder said that he will "follow the law." But administration officials have also made clear that they do not want to target CIA officials who were, in the common phrasing, just doing their jobs. In a speech at CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, Obama said that the agency had his "support and appreciation" and promised that he will "be as vigorous in protecting you, as you are vigorous in protecting the American people."

Here is the problem: CIA officers are the ones who devised and recommended the harsh interrogation techniques.

"CIA officers came up with a series of interrogation techniques that would be carefully monitored at all times to ensure the safety of the prisoner," former CIA director George Tenet wrote in his 2007 book, *At the Center of the Storm*. "The administration and the Department of Justice were fully briefed and approved these tactics."

In his letter on April 16, Dennis Blair, the director of national intelligence, wrote:

> It was during these months that the CIA was struggling to obtain critical information from captured al Qaeda leaders, and requested permission to use harsher interrogation methods. The OLC memos make clear that senior legal officials judged the harsher methods to be legal.

By what reasoning would the Obama administration indemnify those who came up with the techniques and used them while targeting those who approved them? There is a simple answer. The country would almost certainly have little appetite for a legal action directed at the intel-

Stephen F. Hayes is senior writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ligence professionals working to keep us safe after 9/11. But going after the legal functionaries of an unpopular Republican administration—that's quite different.

In an interview, former Vice President Dick Cheney says any prosecutions would be unprecedented and outrageous.

> This is the first time that I can recall that we've had an administration come in, take power, and then suggest using the power of the government against their predecessors, from a legal standpoint. Criminal prosecution of lawyers in the Justice Department whose opinions they disagreed with on an important issue. Criminal prosecutions. When was the last time that happened?

Cheney has requested that the National Archives declassify and release to him copies of two CIA memos—15-20 pages each—that describe the intelligence obtained through the harsh interrogations. He wants that information out so that the American public can correctly evaluate the program. The refusal of the Obama administration to make those documents public, he says, reeks of hypocrisy.

> If the way the operation is going to work is they release only those things that support their case and refuse to release those that support their critics' case, I don't know how they're going to play that. If I were them, I'd be concerned. You're going to have to come up with them sooner or later.

I asked Cheney about George W. Bush's statement that he would not criticize his successor. In a comment that many took to be a shot at his former vice president, Bush said of Obama, "He deserves my silence."

Cheney disagrees.

> I worked in the trenches, and I was a loyal and supportive vice president. And when the president made decisions that I didn't agree with, I still supported him and didn't go out and undercut him. Now we're talking about after we've left office. I have strong feelings about what happened and what we did or didn't do and what's happening now. And I don't have any reason not to forthrightly express those views. I feel it's important to do so especially when President Obama is wrong on important issues facing the nation.

Cheney says he will continue to speak out.

> I went through the Iran-contra hearings and watched the way administration officials ran for cover and left the little guys out to dry. And I was bound and determined that wasn't going to happen this time. I think to George Tenet's credit—I don't agree with George on a lot of stuff—but I think he was of the same view and that's why we had all of these requests coming through for policy guidance and for legal opinions. And this time around I'll do my damndest to defend anybody out there—be they in the agency carrying out the orders or the lawyers who wrote the opinions. I don't know whether anybody else will, but I sure as hell will. ♦

THIS IS NO TIME TO THINK SMALL.

This is the time to think boldly. Which is why we already have a new hybrid instrument cluster to help you drive more efficiently. A new radar-based system that helps you "see" blind spots. New voice technology that can dial your phone and read text aloud.[1] Ideas that aren't in the distant future, but are already in our cars, right now.

To see why, please visit **thefordstory.com.**

The details: [1]Driving while distracted can result in loss of vehicle control. Only use mobile phones and other devices, even with voice commands, when it is safe to do so.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

So Far, So Good?

Only 1,361 days to go.

BY FRED BARNES

'Strong job approval, higher personal ratings"—that's pollster Andrew Kohut's assessment of President Obama at roughly the 100-day point. "A bravura performance," wrote David Broder of the *Washingon Post*. The president's flacks take the Muhammad Ali approach: Obama is The Greatest. What comes to my mind, however, is the guy who falls off a skyscraper and halfway down declares, "So far, so good."

Maybe there's a soft landing ahead for Obama or even a takeoff as his policies succeed. But my expectations are low. One reason is the Obama contradiction. Two of his stated goals (economic recovery, energy independence) are undermined by his actual policies. Another reason is history. There's no evidence to suggest Obama's policies of courting enemies and airing the country's supposed misdeeds will lessen threats to national security or strengthen America's role in the world.

Obama, for the moment, is riding a wave of announcements, claims, hopes, and possibilities. This is what new presidents thrive on. It's what makes them popular, especially because there's no accountability. But a year from now, perhaps sooner, the joy ride will be over. Results will matter. Obama's policies will either be working or not. And if not, even a friendly media won't be able to sugarcoat the bad news or alleviate the political consequences.

The economy is Obama's biggest problem. According to his projections, a sharp recovery will begin this fall and accelerate in 2010. It's doubtful the president's economic advisers believe this scenario, though they're forced to defend it publicly. The $787 billion "stimulus" package probably won't help because its vast spending is backloaded past next year. And it's not very stimulative in the first place.

It's true the American economy is resilient. Its natural tendency is to grow, leaving recessions behind. What arouses this appetite for growth are incentives to invest that, in time, produce a booming economy and new jobs. But rather than incentives, Obama favors impediments: tax hikes for the investor class, more regulation, higher energy prices. He's created the most antibusiness climate in Washington since the New Deal. The best hope for a robust recovery is the trillions in liquidity that Federal Reserve chief Ben Bernanke has injected into the economy. That will surely help, but who knows how much, when, or at what cost in inflation.

Like every president since Richard Nixon, Obama has proclaimed energy independence a priority. If all goes well with his plans to rely increasingly on renewable energy (wind, solar, battery-powered electric cars, etc.), the nation could free itself of dependence on Middle East oil in 20 or 30 years.

But what about now? What about the years before the green utopia arrives? Obama is proposing nothing to fill that gap—quite the contrary. He's blocking offshore drilling for oil and gas, including in places (like the Gulf of Mexico) where production could be increased in a few years. He's delayed leases for energy development in the West. Nuclear power? Forget it. Rising gasoline prices may weaken demand, but not enough to reduce the need for Middle East oil.

The president's decision to continue propping up Detroit, particularly General Motors, is a self-inflicted wound. He wants the auto companies to manufacture low-mileage green cars, not the more popular (and profitable) trucks and SUVs. The problem is Detroit loses money on every green car it sells. Meanwhile, GM is closing its factories for the summer. The company, now an appendage of the federal government, is a money pit. Providing more bailout billions for GM seems inescapable. But it will put Obama sharply at odds with public opinion.

In foreign policy, Obama appears confident his overtures to America's adversaries will pay off. In fact, being respectful and accommodating to Iran, Cuba, and others in the hate-America camp is part two of the Obama Doctrine (part one is multilateralism). But as nice as diplomatic deference sounds, it invariably fails. The enemies of freedom and democracy never reciprocate.

Nor are Iran and Cuba in a reciprocating mood. Obama's civility toward Iran, and a key concession in arms talks, have been answered with the jailing of an American reporter, sped-up efforts to produce nuclear weapons, and fresh attacks by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. After Obama eased travel restrictions to Cuba, he was encouraged by Cuban leader Raúl Castro's willingness to discuss all issues. Within days, Fidel Castro trumped his brother and shot down any prospect of softening Communist rule.

Obama is probably correct that confessing America's sins before the whole world increases our moral standing. But there's a catch. The effect is temporary, and even then it's only in Europe and democratic countries. Enemies, equipped with more fodder for hating America, take advantage. And terrorists, thanks to Obama's statements on torture, now know they can expect an easy time if captured and interrogated.

Presidential honeymoons don't last. Trouble catches up with presidents in many forms: unexpected events, screw-ups at the White House, egregious decisions, failures of policy, and worst of all, a bad economy that lingers. Obama is clever and persuasive, but he's not immune to the way the world works. ♦

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pragmatism Obama Style

Surprise, it's left-wing.

BY PETER BERKOWITZ

As candidate and as president, Barack Obama has presented himself as a postpartisan pragmatist. He has generally refrained from speaking in explicitly ideological terms, and earned a reputation as a silver-tongued orator. Yet on important issues he has seemed anything but pragmatic, adopting rigidly left-liberal or progressive views, suppressing salient consequences, and putting forward misleading or incomplete arguments disrespectful of the case on the other side. In fact, Obama is a pragmatist, but of a kind that is anything but postpartisan.

To be sure, distinguished scholarly authority has vouched for the postpartisanship of Obama's pragmatism. In January 2008, writing in the *New Republic*, Harvard Law School professor Cass Sunstein—a friend and former colleague of Obama's at the University of Chicago Law School, an informal adviser to Obama's presidential campaign, and now head of the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs—argued that Obama was a "visionary minimalist" who, though "willing to think big and to endorse significant departures from the status quo," would "prefer to do so after accommodating, learning from, and bringing on board a variety of different perspectives." Returning to the topic in the *New Republic* in September 2008, Sunstein emphasized that Obama "prefers solutions that can be accepted by people with a wide variety of theoretical inclinations"; his "skepticism about conventional ideological categories is principled, not strategic"; and his "form of pragmatism is heavily empirical; he wants to know what will work."

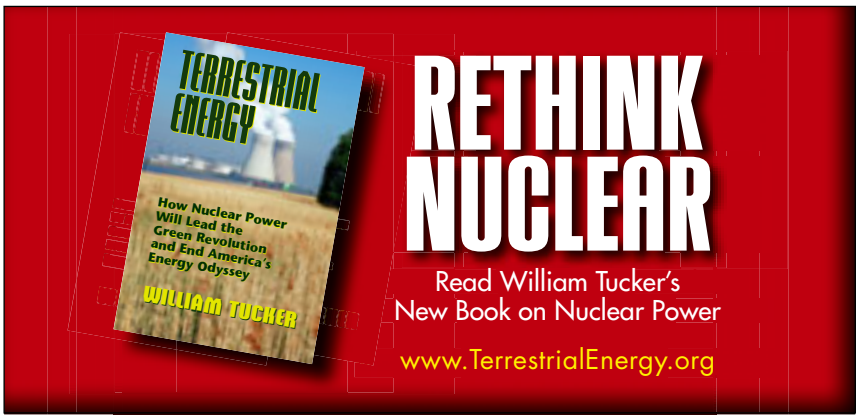
Sunstein's idealizing portrait, however, overlooks the influential refinements of pragmatism wrought at our universities over the last two decades.

As befits his successful journey through the academy—Columbia B.A., Harvard Law School J.D., senior lecturer at the University of Chicago Law School—Obama practices a pragmatism that reflects the 1990s revival of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century school of thought launched by Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey. In its original philosophical, or anti-philosophical, sense—as in its ordinary, everyday sense—pragmatism stands for flexibility in solving problems as opposed to insistence on solutions that conform to religious or metaphysical dogma or rigid moral and political agendas. At its most extreme, philosophical pragmatism denies the very existence of objective truth, arguing that opinions we declare true are merely those that have proved useful to one interest or another.

In the 1980s and 1990s, philosophy professor Richard Rorty—in scholarly papers, learned books, academic lectures, and generally accessible writings—infused pragmatism with a decidedly partisan meaning. Or perhaps, as Rorty suggested, he brought out the original pragmatism's latent partisanship. His synthesis proved popular in philosophy departments, among political theorists, and in law schools. While Obama may never have read a word Rorty wrote, the new pragmatism permeated the atmosphere of the university world Obama inhabited. It proclaimed that philosophical questions were subordinate to political questions, and that the proper political question in America is how to promote progressive ends.

In *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America*, originally delivered as the William E. Massey Sr. Lectures in the History of American Civilization at Harvard University in 1997 and published the following year as a short book by Harvard University Press, Rorty stated his synthesis most succinctly. Proceeding from the dogma that "nobody knows what it would be like to try to be objective when attempting to decide what one's country really is, what its history really means," Rorty declared that there is no point in asking whether any particular account "got America right." Nevertheless, Rorty seemed

Peter Berkowitz is the Tad and Dianne Taube senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to think he got right the nature of right and left in America. The right, he proclaims, is the party of the status quo, defined by the quest to preserve inherited privilege. In contrast, the left, or the left that takes its cue from Walt Whitman and John Dewey—"prophets," proclaims Rorty, of a "civic religion"—is the party of hope; it seeks to bring the reality of America into harmony with democracy's progressive promise.

Although scorning traditional philosophy as obviously refuted and flatly rejecting biblical faith as childish nonsense, Rorty celebrates democracy's progressive promise not as an alternative to religion but as an alternative faith. Agreeing with Dewey that "democracy is neither a form of government nor a social expediency, but a metaphysic of the relation of man and his experience in nature," Rorty teaches that the proper aim of American politics is nothing less than to embody in social and political life "a new conception of what it is to be human." This new conception rejects all claims to "knowledge of God's will, Moral Law, the laws of History or the Facts of Science." Instead, Rorty concludes, the pragmatist will make "shared utopian dreams" his guide to politics.

To realize its utopian dreams, the new pragmatism makes use of a fundamental deception. Purporting to focus on practical consequences, it equates what works with what works to increase government's responsibility to promote social justice in America. Although it reduces morality to interest and dismisses the distinction between true and false as a delusive vestige of an obsolete metaphysics, it treats the progressive interpretation of America as, in effect, good and true. Under the guise of inclusiveness, it denigrates and excludes rival moral and political opinions.

So too it seems for Obama's pragmatism: It appears to be another name for achieving progressive ends; flexibility is confined to the means. This helps explain the sometimes glaring gap between Obama's glistening postpartisan promises and his aggressively partisan policies. Judging by his conduct—as pragmatism officially instructs—Obama appears to have concluded that the best way to maintain public support for progressive programs is to divert attention from the full range of their consequences and, where possible, to refrain from making progressive principles too explicit.

Consider the inattention to consequences in Obama's adamant opposition to the surge. As a senator, he rejected the idea in October 2006, months before President Bush adopted it as policy; again in January 2007 after the president presented his bold plan to the nation; and throughout 2007 and into 2008, as America's innovative counterinsurgency strategy produced steady and then dramatic gains, substantially reducing violence and bringing Sunni tribes into the political process. Throughout 2007 and through much of 2008, even when violence in Iraq remained in his own words "intolerable," Obama neither wavered in his call to withdraw American combat troops according to a rigid 16 month timetable nor gave weight to the humanitarian and strategic costs of the slaughter that his own analysis implied would ensue.

Or take his decision to lift restrictions on federal funding for embryonic stem cell research. The memorandum that accompanied President Obama's March 9 executive order accused the Bush administration of creating "a false choice between sound science and moral values." But whether to use taxpayer money to finance the use and destruction of nascent human life, even for scientific research that may someday provide cures for "devastating diseases and conditions," is not a scientific question but a question of moral and political principle and consequences.

Nevertheless, Obama refused to publicly credit the principle—human life should never be treated only as a means—that supported the restriction on federal funding. And his official statements do not contemplate the coarsening of moral sensibilities that opponents have argued is a likely long-term consequence of using and destroying human embryos for medical research.

Then there's Obama's $3.5 trillion 2010 budget. On the campaign trail he was a deficit hawk who railed against Bush deficits. As president, in his February 24 nationally televised address to a joint session of Congress, he claimed that he was not "a believer in bigger government"; that his budget "reflects the stark reality of what we've inherited—a trillion dollar deficit, a financial crisis, and a costly recession"; and that he would "have to sacrifice some worthy priorities for which there are no dollars." Similarly, in February 26 remarks he stressed that his budget makes "hard choices" and that he was dedicated to "restoring fiscal discipline over the long run."

Alas, such traditionally pragmatic concerns are invisible in his actual budget. At a moment of economic peril, it spends recklessly, hugely increasing the size and scope of the federal government by promising, in one great leap, quality health care for all citizens, a significant increase of higher education grants and loans, and much more extensive taxing and regulation of energy production and use. The staggering cumulative deficits of $9.3 trillion over the next decade that Obama's budget will generate, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, dwarf the Bush deficits that Obama denounced.

A truly postpartisan pragmatist—or a pragmatist in the ordinary, everyday sense—would pay attention to the long-term economic consequences of massive government costs and expansion. He would also show interest in the full range of moral consequences of his policies, in particular the practical impact on citizens' incentives for responsibly managing their lives of a great enlargement of government responsibilities for managing their lives for them. But a pragmatist for whom it is second nature to measure all policy by how well it promotes a progressive agenda might well ignore or deflect consideration of these awkward consequences.

To be sure, nobody familiar with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Obama's career as a community organizer, his eight years in the Illinois state senate, bestselling books, brief record in the U.S. Senate, presidential campaign speeches, behind-closed-doors crack to wealthy San Francisco donors about working class voters who bitterly cling to their guns and religion, and unguarded remark a few weeks before the election to Joe the Plumber about his intention to "spread the wealth around" could reasonably doubt Obama's progressive bona fides.

How to understand his postpartisan and pragmatic credentials was another matter. Little more than three months into his presidency, Obama's claim to transcend partisan divisions stands revealed as an effort to disguise the size and scope of his progressive ambitions.

In *The Audacity of Hope*, Obama deplored a politics in which "narrow interests vie for advantage and ideological minorities seek to impose their own versions of absolute truth." He would pursue "a new kind of politics, one that can excavate and build upon those shared understandings that pull us together as Americans." As president, however, Obama has skillfully exploited the American hunger for a politics of compromise and accommodation to ram through Congress an extremely partisan transformation of American government.

The problem is not partisanship, but a deceptive form of pragmatism, where pretending to be nonpartisan is a pragmatic strategy for imposing far-reaching progressive policies on an unwary public. This pragmatism is unpragmatic because it suppresses inconvenient consequences, and disrespectful of citizens because it obscures its governing principles and ultimate intentions.

It is also a threat to our freedom, which depends on a lively understanding of our constitutional principles and an informed and robust debate about the full range of consequences—social and economic, moral and strategic—of our political choices. ♦

The Real Bipartisanship

Frank Wolf, Jim Cooper, and colleagues target entitlements. BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

Congressman Frank Wolf remembers the moment well. Long before the TARP, the stimulus, trillion-dollar deficits, President Obama's budget, and anti-big government tea parties, the 15-term Virginia Republican had an epiphany. It was the early summer of 2006. Wolf and his wife were visiting Washington's Crossing, the site on the Delaware River where General George Washington led his ragtag army into New Jersey and defeated the British at Trenton. Washington's victory led to subsequent triumphs. Many historians consider it the turning point in the Revolutionary War. The American republic was born at Washington's Crossing, in a sense. This got Wolf thinking. How healthy was America today? What could bring it down? What sort of country was he leaving his five kids and 13 grandchildren? (Another grandkid is on the way.)

Government spending was out of control, Wolf concluded. President Bush and the Republican majorities in Congress were presiding over a massive binge that would only grow worse over time. Future Democratic governments would use the Bush record as cover for more spending. The impending retirement of the Baby Boomers would bring Social Security and Medicare to fiscal ruin. If steps weren't taken soon to ensure the solvency of these programs, draconian tax hikes and benefit cuts were all but guaranteed. Government was poised to gobble up more and more of the economy. The foreign investors who finance the deficit might grow weary and walk away from U.S. Treasuries. "No great nation can do what we're doing," Wolf thought.

Making matters worse, the political system was unwilling or unable (or both) to tackle a problem that seemed far off in the distance. Wolf's response was to join with Representative Jim Cooper, the Blue Dog Democrat from Tennessee, to write the Securing America's Future Economy (SAFE) Act. SAFE is an exercise in government by commission. It would create a 16-person panel to examine the country's fiscal mess and come up with a plan to bring revenues and expenditures into balance: Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, tax policy. The plan would be brought to the Congress for an up-or-down vote. Would it pass? That depends. But at least Congress would be forced to deal responsibly with America's looming fiscal crisis. In the past, Cooper had resisted commissions. In his view, Congress uses them to duck responsibility. But the extent of America's fiscal problems changed his mind.

Cooper and Wolf reintroduced the SAFE legislation last month. Democrat Kent Conrad and Republicans George Voinovich and Judd Gregg have introduced similar legislation in the Senate. Cooper and Wolf's bill has been referred to the House Budget Committee. There's a tough fight ahead. David Obey, the Wisconsin liberal who chairs the powerful Appropriations committee, is adamantly opposed. So are Charles Rangel, the New York Democrat and chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, and White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel.

Plenty of Republicans are skeptical of the SAFE act, too. Some because

Matthew Continetti is the associate editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they aren't as concerned as Wolf is about spending and debt. Others simply don't want to hand power over appropriations and taxes to a commission. Back when the GOP was in power, Wolf wrote 15 letters to the Bush administration asking for the president's support. He didn't get it. In 2008, with Democrats in control of Congress, Wolf met with then-Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson. The topic of discussion: Wolf's entitlement commission. Paulson was sympathetic but not exactly encouraging. "He totally ducked," says Cooper.

In Washington, government by commission is nothing new. The Greenspan Commission in 1983 raised payroll taxes and cut benefits in order to finance Social Security for a generation. Count that as a success. Another was the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC), established in 1988, which has provided Congress a politically expedient means to close military bases. There are arguments against BRAC—one is that it's healthy for civil-military relations to have servicemen spread around the country—but overall the commission has done its job.

The most famous commission in recent memory, the 9/11 Commission, produced mixed results. The commission's staff wrote an excellent book-length report on the terrorist attacks, but the group's televised hearings became a media circus and a vehicle for partisan politics in an election year. In 2005, President Bush didn't act on the recommendations of his own Tax Reform Commission. Wolf himself helped create the 2006 Iraq Study Group (ISG), whose drab report told us nothing new. Bush wisely ignored the ISG's recommendations in favor of the surge.

Commissions aren't a panacea. Their success depends on a variety of factors, the most important of which is the political environment. It doesn't matter what the commission comes up with; if the time isn't right, if the votes and presidential support aren't there, even the best policies are dead on arrival. Just ask former senator Connie Mack III, who chaired the Bush tax panel.

There's also the concern that government by commission is undemocratic. No one elects a commission. The commission's deliberations are often secret. The voters are left out. Beltway factotums make important decisions in their place. Wolf says such concern isn't warranted. His entitlement commission would include the Treasury secretary, the White House budget chief, and 14 others appointed by congressional majority and minority leaders. Wolf imagines those appointments would include a couple of congressmen. The statute requires that the commission hold public meetings across the country. And Congress would have the opportunity to add amendments to the commission's plan before it held an up-or-down vote on the overall package.

> The impending retirement of the Baby Boomers will bring Social Security and Medicare to fiscal ruin. If steps aren't taken, draconian tax hikes and benefit cuts are all but guaranteed.

The answer to our budget woes isn't rocket science: increase revenue and cut spending. But will the revenue increases come from a growing economy and consumption taxes or prosperity-squelching tax hikes on income and labor? And is there any political will at all to pare back public expenditures? Certainly the Democrats' main interest at the moment is expanding government. And many Republicans want to dodge tough choices by training their criticism on earmark spending alone. They see major budget cuts that include entitlement spending as a political death trap.

They may have a point. Republicans lost 26 House seats in 1982 after backing President Reagan's budget cuts. The Republican Revolution ran aground in 1995 when President Clinton and Speaker Gingrich faced off over cuts in Medicare spending. Clinton won reelection the next year and the GOP lost 8 House seats. Bush's push for Social Security reform in 2005 was a failure.

But the political costs of arresting big government may not be so high after all. Conservative writer W. James Antle III points out that Republicans also held onto the Senate in 1982, and Reagan won reelection in 1984. Despite the House losses in 1996, the GOP won two seats in the Senate that year and held onto Congress for another decade. Not bad. Wolf notes that he ran on entitlement reform, costly government, and the SAFE Act in his 2008 reelection campaign. Wolf beat a well-financed Democratic challenger 59 percent to 39 percent, a two-point improvement on his 2006 victory margin.

With few friends in Congress and none at all in the White House, Wolf has decided to go directly to the public. He's won support from former U.S. comptroller David Walker, now president of the Peterson Foundation. A recent report from the bipartisan Center for the Study of the Presidency and the Congress reaches similar conclusions to Wolf's. *Washington Post* editorial page editor Fred Hiatt wrote a recent column in support of Wolf's bill. And this week the American Enterprise Institute will host Wolf and Cooper for a panel discussion. "Reasonable people can and will differ about whether there ought to be some changes" to the legislation, says Walker, who adds that SAFE is a good start. One change Walker would like to see is a requirement that all amendments to the commission's recommendations be revenue neutral.

Walker is optimistic that Wolf and Cooper's bill could come to a vote later this year. Right now the political momentum is with Wolf's opponents. But momentum can shift. It's not hard to detect a real anxiety about overspending and deficits. And Wolf has a powerful argument to make. Yes, he can say, history shows that nations can live with huge public debt, but they can't live well. And not without first surrendering their greatness. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bring Him His Machine Gun

Meet South Africa's new president.

BY JAMES KIRCHICK

Last Wednesday, South Africans returned the African National Congress to power for the fourth consecutive time since the end of apartheid in 1994. This was not an unexpected outcome. For the past 15 years, the armed liberation movement turned governing party has dominated the country politics, and at press time, the ANC had maintained its two-thirds majority in parliament. The election came at a critical time for South Africa, and the 80 percent voter turnout was a record. The country is facing its first recession in 17 years, poverty and high unemployment (estimated at 20-40 percent) remain massive problems, and the education system lags behind those of many, far less well-developed African states.

Yet these issues were easily overshadowed by the man South Africans elected president: ANC leader Jacob Zuma. Depending on whom you talk to, Zuma is either a victim of a far-reaching conspiracy aimed at destroying his political career, a bumbling yet charismatic political hack, or a Robert Mugabe-in-waiting.

While Zuma has elements of all three characterizations, he is a far more sophisticated figure than the portrayals on offer from his supporters or detractors. A self-educated, former leader of the intelligence branch of the ANC's armed wing, Zuma was acquitted on rape charges in 2006—but only after claiming that he had intercourse with the HIV-positive woman in question because she was wearing a knee-length skirt and had her legs uncrossed and that he had protected himself from infection by showering afterwards (Zuma, an acknowledged polygamist, has had four wives and currently has three fiancées while estimates of his progeny run from 10 to 18).

For the past four years, Zuma has also been dogged by corruption charges, stemming from accusations that the hundreds of thousands of dollars he received from a shady "financial adviser" were in fact bribes to arrange a lucrative arms deal for a French weapons manufacturer. In a curiously timed decision, the government dropped the case against him three weeks ago, not from lack of evidence but because of supposed prosecutorial misconduct. Indeed, in announcing his abandonment of the charges, the country's chief prosecutor stated that his "team itself had recommended that the prosecution should continue even if the allegations [of political interference] are true, and that it should be left to a court of law to decide whether to stop the prosecution."

Zuma and his supporters in the South African Communist party and Congress of South African Trade Unions (which form an official coalition with the ANC) believe that he is the victim of former president Thabo Mbeki's machinations. Mbeki, who sacked Zuma from his job as deputy president in 2005 when the corruption charges became public, was forced out of office last September after allegations that he had tampered with the Zuma case. Having lost the internal struggle for control of the ANC, a group of Mbeki partisans formed the Congress of the People (COPE) in December, which advertised itself as the first legitimate black-led opposition to ANC rule. Thanks to constant infighting and lackluster leadership, however, COPE received less than 10 percent of the vote on Wednesday.

It's easy for Western journalists to paint Zuma as the archetypal African Big Man. But the reasons why South Africans would vote him into power defy easy caricature. In the years running up to the country's first democratic election, Zuma earned respect for using his position as the ANC's most prominent Zulu to quell violence between ANC supporters and those of the Zulu Inkatha Freedom party. But, it would also be wrong to say that most ANC voters define themselves as Zuma supporters. The ANC's hegemonic role in South African politics is attributable to its historic role as a national liberation movement, and its post-apartheid standing is not unlike that of the Democratic machine in Boston; either could put up an inanimate object of their choosing for office, and it would win. Polls before the election showed that 60 percent of voters distrust Zuma and that only 41 percent of ANC voters believed him to be innocent of corruption. The party, and Zuma, still won an overwhelming majority.

What can't be overstated is the power of Zuma's personality. In August 2006, I attended a preliminary hearing for Zuma's corruption trial in the small city of Pietermaritzburg, located in historic Zululand. Inside the courtroom were order, jurisprudence, and men in black, flowing robes speaking the Queen's English. Outside were hordes of Zulus chanting and waving signs calling for the political head of Mbeki.

When Zuma exited the courthouse, resplendent in his pinstripe suit, a deafening cheer arose from the thousands amassed in the city center. Surrounded by security men in red ties, (a sign of support for the South African Communist party), Zuma climbed the stage that had been erected for him and performed the anti-apartheid struggle song "Bring Me My Machine Gun" in his native Zulu. He does this frequently at his public appearances, endearing him to his supporters and alarming his critics. The crowd was in absolute hysterics, singing along and cheering as

James Kirchick is an assistant editor at the New Republic. *He has reported extensively from South Africa and Zimbabwe.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Zuma stomped his feet and shook his fist. Though this man seems like any run-of-the-mill, corrupt strongman, the exuberance of the crowd and warm tones of Zuma's voice are infectious, even to the cynical outsider. I felt chills, finding myself caught between Zuma's personal magnetism and my own presumption of his legal culpability.

The fact is that, in spite of the sympathy he has won from the left, no one really knows where Jacob Zuma stands on the serious issues facing the country. He has been critical of Mbeki's shameful policy of propping up Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe. Zuma has also been more conciliatory in dealing with the country's economically powerful white minority—especially Afrikaners—many of whom felt the cold shoulder of the ANC in spite of its "Rainbow Nation" rhetoric. Where Mbeki called critics of the nation's out-of-control crime racists, Zuma has spoken eloquently of his own experience as a mugging victim. Tackling violent crime will be a priority for his government as South Africa prepares to host next year's World Cup.

In spite of Zuma's demagoguery and ideological indeterminateness, there are reasons for hope. While some Western investors fear Zuma's populist rhetoric and strong ties to the ANC's furthest left elements, Trevor Manuel, the widely admired finance minister who has overseen consistently high growth rates over the past 12 years, will stay on as steward of the South African economy. "Our economy won't become ideological, it will stay rational," Manuel recently said, hinting that the giant personality in the presidential office won't adversely affect the country's monetary and fiscal policies. The Democratic Alliance—the descendant of the liberal, white anti-apartheid Progressive party—respectably increased its share of the vote total from 12 to 16 percent, winning control of the Western Cape Province and continuing to make inroads among nonwhite voters. Its growth and the very existence of an ANC-breakaway party are signs of the slow erosion of South Africa's essentially one-party state.

Still, much depends on how Jacob Zuma performs. Will he move to further blur the line between state institutions and the ANC, a process that accelerated under Mbeki? Will he govern as the democratically elected leader of all South Africans or seek to serve the sectarian interests of his party and tribe? Followers of American politics like to talk a lot about "charisma," but not even the most charismatic of American political figures—not Barack Obama, not Ronald Reagan—inspire the devotion that Zuma engenders amongst his supporters, a loyalty that is partly based on ethnicity, but also indelibly a result of South Africa's history of struggle against racial oppression and Zuma's heroic role in that fight. Nelson Mandela had such power, but his decency and selfless devotion to the betterment of his country (as opposed to his own interests) were never in question. The entrancing qualities of Jacob Zuma similarly speak to something meaningful, but also disturbing, about the direction of South African politics. ♦

Spy Mystery Solved

His name was Wynn. Arthur Wynn.

BY JOHN EARL HAYNES, HARVEY KLEHR, & ALEXANDER VASSILIEV

In our forthcoming book, *Spies: The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America*, we identify several dozen Americans never before suspected of working for Soviet intelligence. These identifications are based on KGB archival records of its operations in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s.

These records included some files on atomic espionage that also covered KGB work in Great Britain in World War II—due to the close links between the British and American atomic projects. To our surprise, we learned that from 1942 until early 1944 the chief source of Moscow's intelligence on the Manhattan Project were two KGB recruits in Britain with access to Manhattan Project technical reports. One of these British sources, Melita Norwood, was exposed in 1999 thanks to the KGB material Vasili Mitrokhin gave to MI5 in the 1990s. The other is revealed for the first time in *Spies*: Engelbert Broda, a refugee Austrian physicist and secret communist, who worked at the Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge.

John Earl Haynes, Harvey Klehr, and Alexander Vassiliev's new book, Spies: The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America, *will be published in May by Yale University Press.*

Another KGB spy in Britain identified in the documents we examined had no discernible American connections, so he is not discussed in our book—but he is well worth some attention, for his identification clears up a mystery in espionage history.

In their 1998 book, *The Crown Jewels: The British Secrets at the Heart of the KGB Archives*, historian Nigel West and former KGB officer Oleg Tsarev cited an October 1936 report from the KGB's illegal station in London announcing to Moscow that through Edith Tudor Hart, the Austrian-born KGB asset who had recruited Kim Philby, the station had recruited a "second SOHNCHEN [Philby's cover name] who, in all probability, offers even greater possibilities than the first." By 1937, this source had been given the code name "Scott" and credited with providing "about 25 leads." Theodore Mally, "Scott's" KGB controller, noted, "most of these are raw material, but there are 4-5 among them who have already been studied and on whom we have already started working."

Moscow worried that too many of the leads had connections to the British communist party and urged that "Scott" be more selective. In April,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mally submitted a report prepared by Scott discussing the party members at Oxford and their professions. In July, "Scott" wrote another report on the student communist populations at Oxford, Cambridge, and the University of London. It optimistically noted,

> if we work cautiously in the universities, the risk is not very great. We can be practically sure of always being able to select reliable people.

A number of his potential recruits were signed on before the station was closed down due to the Soviet purges, and, once contact with "Scott" was reestablished in 1941, he helped recruit new sources. West and Tsarev's book had, however, been written with the cooperation of the Russian SVR— successor to the KGB—and under the rules of their agreement the identification of "Scott" was withheld.

But the intriguing material about "Scott" and his possible connection to an "Oxford ring" that paralleled the well-documented and highly successful "Cambridge ring" of Soviet spies (Philby, Anthony Blunt, Guy Burgess, Donald Maclean) fueled speculation among British espionage historians and journalists about "Scott's" identity. Candidates have ranged from Sir David Scott Fox, a diplomat and former fellow of Queen's College, Oxford, to Sir Peter Wilson, a chairman of Sotheby's, who went from Oxford into the British intelligence services in 1933.

Peter Wright, the MI5 officer whose 1988 exposé *Spycatcher* drew British government lawsuits, named Bernard Floud, a Labour MP who committed suicide while under consideration for a ministerial appointment; his brother Peter, former director of the Victoria and Albert Museum; Sir Andrew Cohen, a senior diplomat; and Jennifer Williams Hart as connected to the rumored Oxford ring. Wright, however, wrote that his investigation, carried out in the 1960s, had gone nowhere. Several of the suspects were already dead or died during the investigation; several others committed suicide. Jennifer Hart (no relation to Edith Tudor Hart) admitted being a student communist in the 1930s but put a benign twist on her recruitment, suggesting that after joining the Home Office around 1938 she met with a clandestine Russian contact named "Otto" who told her to keep her party membership secret and lie low. Uncomfortable with the deception, she quit the party, never having turned over any secret information. Hart poopoohed the idea that there had been an Oxford ring, telling one journalist: "As far as I'm aware there wasn't anything like Cambridge. There were communists of course, and Soviets were trying to recruit them, but as far as I'm aware they were not successful."

While the evidence we have uncovered does not answer the question of how many spies the KGB recruited at Oxford or how much information they turned over, it does provide the identity of "Scott," that enthusiastic recruiter who offered so many names to Theodore Mally. A memo from Pavel Fitin, head of the KGB's counterintelligence service to Vsevolod Merkulov, head of the KGB in July 1941, noted:

> "Scott" is Arthur Wynn, about 35 years old, member of the CP of England, graduated from Cambridge and Oxford univs., radio expert, design engineer for the Cossor Co. Recruited in Oct. 34 by "Stephan" from "Edith's" lead.

("Stephan" was Mally and "Edith" was Edith Tudor Hart.)

Wynn had actually come under MI5 suspicion in the 1960s when Wright had interviewed Jennifer Hart. She had identified Wynn as briefly her link with "Otto" and noted that Wynn had been a close friend of Edith Tudor Hart. But when Wright had suggested that Wynn be offered immunity and a security clearance for a proposed senior position at the Board of Trade if he provided a full account of his relationship with the Soviets in the 1930s, his MI5 superiors dropped the investigation, fearing scandal from the suicides incident to the Oxford ring investigation.

Arthur Henry Ashford Wynn was born January 22, 1910. His father was a professor of medicine, and Wynn was educated at Oundle School and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he studied natural sciences and mathematics. He was in Germany in 1933 when Hitler came to power. According to one of his close friends, he married a young German communist activist to enable her to escape—just as Kim Philby had done for an Austrian communist. The marriage of convenience did not last long.

He was divorcing his wife when he fell in love with Peggy Moxon, who was a student communist at Oxford. They married in 1938 and had three sons and a daughter. Wynn received a law degree from Lincoln's Inn in 1939 and intended to practice with Sir Stafford Cripps, a leading left-wing politician expelled from the Labour party in early 1939 for advocating a popular front alliance with communists and anti-appeasement liberals and conservatives.

The advent of war changed Wynn's plans, and he went to work on advanced navigational aids for the RAF's Bomber Command. His employer, the Cossor Company, had converted to war production in 1939 and worked on the early development of airborne radar. Following the Labour party's nationalization of the mines in 1948, Wynn became a bureaucrat in the Division of Fuel and Power, specializing in mine safety, and continued to hold positions on government boards and commissions in that area through the 1960s. In the 1970s, his interests turned to family policy and maternal nutrition. Together with his wife, he produced a series of books and papers with both academic and political import. Wynn died at the age of 91 on September 24, 2001.

There is no indication of when or if Wynn ever repudiated his secret allegiance. Likewise, we have no idea how long he remained in contact with Soviet espionage after Fitin's July 1941 report. Nor is it clear whether the shutdown of the KGB's illegal station in 1939 as a result of the purges aborted the creation of an Oxford ring that would have matched the creativity of the Cambridge ring. Intelligence agencies only reluctantly open their archives for researchers, and well-documented espionage histories are slow in coming. Nonetheless, one mystery, the identity of "Scott," the ambitious recruiter of British students, is now solved. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The SAT and Its Enemies

Fear and loathing in college admissions

By Andrew Ferguson

One Saturday morning this month, a quarter million kids or more will slump their way into the fluorescent tomb of a high school classroom, slide into the seat of a flimsy polypropylene combo chair-desk, and then, with clammy palms dampening the shafts of perfectly sharpened number two pencils, they will take the SAT. They will carefully mark only one answer for each question, as instructed, and they will make sure to fill the entire circle darkly and completely. They will not make any stray marks on their answer sheet. If they erase, they will do so completely, because incomplete erasures may be scored as intended answers. They will not open their test book until the supervisor tells them to do so, and if they finish before time is called, they will not turn to any other section of the test. And over the next three hours they will determine the course of the rest of their lives.

At least that's what a lot of them will think they're doing. They'll be wrong, of course—dozens of people have gone on to live happy and healthy lives after bombing the SAT—but they won't know it because an oddly large number of powerful forces in American society have combined to elevate the SAT to unlikely heights of influence and to impute to it unimaginable powers. You'll hear the SAT can wreck a person's future, even if only temporarily, or salvage a new future from a misspent past. The SAT can enforce class hierarchies or break them open; it unfairly allocates society's spoils and sorts the population into haves and have-nots, or it can unearth intellectual gifts that our nation's atrocious high schools have managed to keep buried. It is a tool of understanding, a cynical hoax, a triumph of social science, a jackboot on the neck of the disadvantaged. But rarely is it just a *test*.

Even the College Board, which administers the SAT, and the Educational Testing Service, which designs it each year, are sheepish about using the word. The SAT was originally an acronym for Scholastic Aptitude Test. When critics objected to the word "aptitude," for reasons we'll consider in a moment, SAT came to stand for Scholastic Assessment Test. Marketers soon realized that test and assessment have pretty much the same meaning, making "SAT" a kind of solecism, one of those repetitive redundancies that repeats itself—bad form for a test measuring verbal ability. So they gave up trying to make an acronym altogether. "Assessment" was dropped, and so was "test," and "scholastic" too. Today the SAT is officially just the SAT; the letters don't stand for anything, as if the test-makers were too timid to declare what they're up to.

Critics of the SAT are eager to remind you that its intellectual genealogy traces back to eugenicists, racial theorists, and other creepy types in the early 20th century.

And who can blame them? Critics of the SAT are eager to remind you that its intellectual genealogy traces back to the intelligence tests that eugenicists, racial theorists, and other creepy types promoted in the early 20th century as a way of purifying the gene pool.

"Racists worked hard to design a test that would confirm their racism, and they succeeded," says Robert Schaeffer of FairTest, an activist organization that has declared war on all standardized tests, especially the SAT. A large number of people in higher education share his disdain, both for the test itself and for the uses to which it is put, usually by themselves. Any gathering of college admissions professionals—deans, school counselors, private coaches—swells before long with a chorus of complaint about the SAT's deficiencies, even though most of them are bound, by habit, custom, or popular expectation, to use the test in their everyday work.

Andrew Ferguson is a senior editor at The Weekly Standard.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Now they're beginning to rebel, and the hostility grows more ferocious every year. It's fair to say the tide of elite opinion now runs solidly against the use of the SAT in college admissions. Last fall, the National Association of College Admissions Counselors (NACAC) released a report calling on its members at last to act on their skepticism by taking steps to decommission the test for use at their schools. When the report was presented at the group's convention last September, the only complaints were that it didn't go far enough in condemning the test. "It's a lousy test," one NACAC member said heatedly on the convention floor. "It's destructive of what all of us here are trying to do."

This spring three more selective and well-known schools—Fairfield University, Connecticut College, and Sewanee: The University of the South—took NACAC's advice, announcing that they would adopt a "test optional" admissions policy, telling applicants they no longer were required to submit SAT scores but were free to submit them if they wished. The schools join dozens of well-regarded peers—Bates, Bowdoin, Hamilton, Holy Cross, and Wake Forest among them—in striking a blow against the SAT, and in being very proud of themselves for doing so.

Wake Forest's president, Nathan O. Hatch, announced his school's SAT policy in a much-discussed op-ed in the *Washington Post*. "By opening doors even wider to qualified students from all backgrounds and circumstances," he wrote, "we believe we are sending a powerful message of inclusion and advocating for democracy of access to higher education."

Hatch noted that on average, richer students score higher on the SAT than poorer students. He did not note that on average, Asian Americans perform better than whites on standardized tests, whites better than Hispanics, Hispanics better than African Americans, and, at least in math, men better than women. Any such gap, President Hatch said, is conclusive evidence of some crippling defect in the SAT—and provides sufficient reason to eliminate it from college admissions.

Like so many widely shared beliefs in the world of higher education, this argument is seldom challenged, even though it's a relatively novel view. The "achievement gaps" in SAT scores were evident 40 years ago, yet most liberal educators defended standardized tests. In their book *The Academic Revolution*, published in 1968, the sociologists Christopher Jencks and David Riesman famously (famously for sociologists) expressed what was then still the majority view.

"Those who look askance at testing should not rest their case on the simple notion that tests are 'unfair to the poor,'" they wrote. "Life is unfair to the poor. Tests merely measure the results."

Jencks and Riesman weren't fatalists about this state of affairs; they thought remedial programs in primary and secondary schools might help "close the gap," and "preventive measures" rectifying income inequality would be even more successful. Still, the gaps themselves weren't reason enough to abandon the tests or the university's interest in the aptitude that the SAT measured. Do you fire your doctor because you don't like his diagnosis?

Riesman and Jencks reminded their readers how it was that standardized tests like the SAT became essential to college admissions in the first place. Notwithstanding its ancestral ties to racism and eugenics, the SAT was introduced by progressives to accomplish the same goals that our contemporary progressives now say it impedes: democratizing higher education, uplifting the poor, ending the class spoils system, and making merit rather than accidents of birth the measure of success.

THOMAS FLUHARTY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The irony is hard to miss. From the progressives' panacea in the mid-20th century to the progressives' bogeyman in the early 21st, the evolution of the SAT is a story about our shifting notions of merit, democracy, populism, the life of the mind, and what we expect from higher education—an industry into which the country pours many billions of dollars a year. In a way kids are right to be jittery. The SAT is more than a test, and always has been. If it's being condemned today, this is a grisly instance of the revolution devouring its children.

The SAT first became popular in the 1930s, when one side won an argument and the other side lost. The argument was over how college administrators should choose the students who would attend their schools—and who would, by extension, enter the country's leadership class in politics, business, and religion, at a time when fewer than 2 percent of American adults held post-secondary degrees. In the 19th century, those hoping to attend college submitted themselves to interviews with school faculty or took essay exams the faculty concocted. In 1900 a consortium of East Coast colleges formed the Collegiate Entrance Examination Board, the forerunner of today's College Board, to regulate the chaos. The board wrote and disseminated "achievement tests" as a way of standardizing admissions from one school to another. The tests assessed knowledge of English grammar and literature, American and ancient history, Latin and classical Greek—the fundamentals of the prep school curriculum, and the things that every educated gentleman was presumed to know. A high score virtually guaranteed college admission.

The system of achievement tests worked well for awhile. But before long the bluebloods at Columbia, Harvard, and elsewhere were alarmed to discover that a disproportionate number of high scorers were not People Like Us. Many of them, indeed, were Jews. As Jerome Karabel tells the story in his magisterial history of college admissions, *The Chosen*, administrators quickly adapted. Personal interviews became common as a way of screening applicants. And the criteria for admissions were mysteriously enlarged. Admissions officers claimed to weigh ineffable qualities like "leadership," "breeding," "character," and "well-roundedness."

Karabel reprints a typology of applicants that Harvard admissions officers developed privately in the 1920s. Among the types:

> Cross-country style—steady man who plugs and plugs and plugs, won't quit when most others would …
> Boondocker—unsophisticated rural background …
> Taconic—culturally depressed background, low-income …
> Mr. School—significant extracurricular and perhaps (but not necessarily) athletic participation, plus excellent academic record.

You can guess which types Harvard preferred, no matter how well they did on the achievement tests.

Progressives of the era knew that these "objective methods" were just a dodge—a high-minded way of keeping the riffraff out, dividing the applicant pool between our kind and everyone else. One of those progressives, James B. Conant, was appointed president of Harvard in 1933. A product of a shabby-genteel Yankee family himself, Conant was the chief theorist and propagandist for the "meritocratic ideology," as Karabel calls it, that became the declared standard for selective college admissions in mid-century America: Access to an elite education should be based on academic ability rather than wealth or family background. Conant's view wasn't really an ideology so much as an ideal—one violated almost as often as it was honored, as today's progressive critics never tire of pointing out.

But still it was an ideal, and even often-ignored ideals have the power to shape events. Conant despised inherited privilege and the stratagems used to sustain it. (A pet cause of his was the 100 percent inheritance tax.) He was a scientist by training, a believer that reality could be quantified. And he was a democrat. He assumed that cognitive ability—the thing that made a man do well in school and, in time, might make him economically productive, a solid citizen, even perhaps a leader—could be identified and measured. He assumed that this ability, unlike economic power, was distributed equally across the population. His duty was to seek it out, and well-wrought tests would help him do it.

But not the tests that were being used in college admission, at Harvard and elsewhere. Tests of knowledge—achievement tests—by their very design worked against the meritocratic ideal, because they favored the members of one class over another. Who but the sons of privilege would do well on tests drawn from the curriculums of prep schools where the sons of privilege were taught? Far more promising, Conant believed, was the test of scholastic aptitude being developed by the College Board. The SAT claimed to measure not a grasp of facts but the acuteness of intelligence. It leveled the advantage that elite high schools gave their students by measuring the capacity to learn rather than learning itself. In time, Conant thought, the SAT could become a means to reward innate talent and break down the barriers to admission that wealth and privilege had put up. A favorite phrase was "diamonds in the rough," used to describe the jewel-like abilities lurking out there in the high schools of the vast Republic, in the intelligent kid

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hidden away in a bad school, or the bright boy with bad grades.

The SAT was built for mass use. It was based on the multiple-choice tests the Army had administered to draftees in World War I; those tests were likewise based on the now-infamous IQ tests developed, with racist intent, a generation before. The Army draftees of 1917 made for a human jambalaya unlike any the country had ever seen. The draft had roped in 2 million farm boys, city boys, math whizzes, boulevardiers, dullards, bookworms, sharpies, poets, roués, every human type susceptible to a single test. The Army thought a mass testing program—the largest ever undertaken—would identify their abilities, or the lack of them, and channel the men into the military tasks to which they were best suited. Whatever their fairness and accuracy, the tests were judged to be accurate and useful by the officers who relied on them, and they were seized on by businessmen and educators in the era of "scientific management" that followed the war.

By the time Conant took them up, the SAT had been expanded into two sections, verbal and mathematical. The twin purposes allowed colleges room to choose which kind of student they wanted to attract, word men or numbers men. The tests were refined year to year, and with each revision, said the College Board, the similarities to the earlier IQ tests faded. The first SAT's were pitiless with time: 97 minutes to answer 315 questions. The questions were no pillow fight either. One early set of problems laid out an artificial language, complete with grammatical rules and vocabulary, and required the test taker to translate English sentences into it. The time limits were eventually loosened, and "puzzle-solving" problems were replaced by reading comprehension questions—which seemed a purer test of verbal facility, and less susceptible to coachable tricks.

The SAT itself was introduced by progressives to accomplish the same goals that our contemporary progressives now say it impedes: democratizing higher education and making merit rather than accidents of birth the measure of success.

Conant's embrace of the SAT gave it a kind of informal certification among American educators, who even then were in thrall to Harvard College. After World War II, the test became unavoidable. The GI Bill flooded college admissions offices with applicants. The College Board formed the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to develop the test, while continuing to market and administer it. Together they greatly eased the burden on admissions deans. They offered the test nationwide on common dates under uniform, closely monitored conditions and furnished easily understandable scores. The SAT had the reassuring look of a scientific enterprise; ETS hired superb statisticians who produced a gusher of data testifying to the test's reliability and its yearly molting of imperfections. And the test was a bargain, at least for the schools: Then as now, the College Board charged a fee from the kids who were required to take the tests and not from the colleges that required the kids to take them.

Most appealing, though, was the Conant ideal: The SAT was thought to democratize and objectify what would otherwise have been a chaotic and arbitrary process of selection, open to favoritism and corruption. It offered beleaguered admissions officers a way to assess applicants that was not only accurate but fair, untainted by class or wealth. And it had almost no competition. In 1959, test-writers from the University of Iowa created the ACT (American College Testing), which came to be seen as a rival to the SAT. The ACT more closely resembled an achievement test, tied to high school curriculums in Iowa, and for the next 40 years it did little to dent the popularity of the SAT, particularly among private colleges and in the East.

The triumph of the SAT was complete in 1968, when the University of California, with its dozen campuses and tens of thousands of students, made it a requirement for admission for most applicants. This solidified the test's place in popular culture. It was a symbol of the American way of success, the level playing field, the belief that prosperity was within the reach of everyone regardless of birth. And more than a symbol: Self-appointed social observers—nice job, by the way—ascribed to the test miraculous powers and mythic importance. The liberal journalist Nicholas Lemann, who wrote a comprehensive history of the SAT, called it "the basic mechanism for sorting the American population." And, he took care to add, he wasn't alone in this view: "It is almost universally taken to be today … a means of deciding who would reap America's rich material rewards."

This is an overblown way of describing a real trend. With high school education nearly universal, a college degree became an increasingly important marker of talent and ability, and a degree was hard to come by if you didn't take the SAT. The trend didn't make the test the "gatekeeper" it was often said to be. But the exaggera-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tions served the interests of everyone involved—except the test taker, who felt more acutely than ever the pressure of a one-shot chance at success. The College Board and ETS enjoyed the inflated view because it made them seem indispensable, even as they protested halfheartedly that test scores should be only one factor among many considered by admissions officers. The officers themselves were reassured by the authority and objectivity the tests supposedly provided. A wildly growing test-preparation industry fed off the students' fear of failure. And journalists and conspiracy mongers were delighted to discover, in the College Board-ETS combine, an ominous new cabal of white guys rigging the game of life to their own advantage.

Exposés of the SAT became a commonplace of left-wing journalism. As Riesman and Jencks had anticipated, the attacks came along lines of race and class. "For all its sermonizing about equal opportunity," wrote another liberal journalist, David Owen, in another angry book-length exposé called *None of the Above* (1955), "ETS is the powerful servant of the privileged." Coming from the left the attacks seemed odd, directed as they were against a test that only a generation earlier had been installed as the quintessential liberal reform. But they nicely illustrated a larger rupture in the country's cultural politics. The old progressivism, with its meritocratic ideal, was being abandoned by the new progressives, who saw the meritocratic ideal as at best a delusion and, at worst and more likely, a scam.

When SAT scores were grouped by the taker's race, class, or sex, they began to show Asians before whites, Hispanics before blacks, rich before poor, and men before women, except in the sections where women were before men. Activists took this as proof there was something wrong with the test.

Their evidence was the achievement gap. While the College Board and ETS said they worked hard to ensure that everyone who took the SAT took the same test, everyone didn't get the same score. And when the scores were grouped by the race, class, or sex of the test taker—as opposed to his hair color, religion, or shoe size—the scores began to show the pattern mentioned earlier: Asians before whites, Hispanics before blacks, rich before poor, and men before women, except in the sections where women were before men.

You could react to this pattern in one of three ways. Option one is to ask what relevance group numbers had in a country, and an educational system, where merit is supposed to attach to individuals. Option two is to note that the data reveal that some test takers—owing to their schools, their family lives, their neighborhoods, the social services they were given access to, the expectations of parents and friends—had been less well prepared for college than other test takers and, as a result, had a slimmer chance of doing well in some colleges than other colleges. Option three is to insist that something is wrong with the test.

The activists chose number three. They wanted to fire the doctor.

From here the story of the SAT becomes the familiar one of an American institution struggling to make itself acceptable to activists and enthusiasts who will never, under any circumstances, find the institution acceptable. It's hard to feel sorry for entities as flush and bureaucratic as ETS and the College Board. Still there's pathos in the strenuous and futile efforts they have made to appease their critics. The case against them has never been strong. Instances of actual bias within the test itself are hard to come by. The most famous example, cited in nearly every extended critique of the SAT, was a so-called analogy question involving, of all things, rowing. The question was part of a test of verbal reasoning, and the form it took required the test taker to relate pairs of words to each other: "a runner is to a marathon as a _____ is to a _____." Five choices were given. The correct answer was "oarsman/regatta." The question's bias against poorer kids is pretty clear: Anyone raised around the yacht club had an automatic advantage in getting the answer right.

The mental image of ETS test designers lounging about in ascots and double-breasted blazers has proved too amusing to resist; critics still like to cite the regatta question as a sign of the obtuseness of ETS and the College Board, even though it was dropped from the test nearly 40 years ago. Indeed, all analogy questions have been eliminated, after studies indicated that test takers from higher socioeconomic brackets routinely performed better on those questions than poorer kids. Since 1970, ETS has built an intricate bureaucratic apparatus to try to cleanse each question—or "item," as a test question is called—of anything offensive or unfair.

Before a test is put together, according to ETS guide-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lines, four separate reviewers examine every item for efficacy and bias. Then the item goes to a special "sensitivity reviewer" who also scrubs it for any phrasing or inference that might offend members of identity groups. If a sensitivity reviewer objects to an item, the writer responsible for it can appeal the objection, and the case goes to another team of sensitivity reviewers for adjudication. And finally, once the test has been taken, the answers given by all test takers to each question are tabulated to see if any item "tended to cause inordinate differences [in the number of correct answers] between people in different groups." If it did, "it is discarded or revised and reviewed again."

At first, in the 1970s, "different groups" was defined by socioeconomic status, sex, and race, but the list has lengthened over the decades to include ethnicity and much else. Subgroups today include "older people," people with disabilities, and "people who are bisexual, gay, lesbian, or transgendered." The sensitivity guidelines are quite detailed. Word problems on math sections need to be checked for "unnecessarily difficult language" that might trip up a math whiz who's not a native English speaker. Charts and graphs are forbidden because they are difficult to reproduce in Braille. The phrase "hearing impaired," to describe people whose hearing is impaired, is discouraged in favor of "deaf and hard of hearing." Test writers must steer clear of the words "normal" and "abnormal." "Hispanic" should not be used as a noun, and neither should "blind"; "black" can be used only as an adjective. "Penthouse," "polo," and other "words generally associated with wealthier social classes" are likewise off-limits; regatta, too, needless to say, along with any mention of luxuries or pricey financial instruments like "junk bonds." Elderly is to be avoided in describing people who are elderly. "America" can't be used to describe the United States. "In general, avoid using *we* unless the people included in the term are specified. The use of an undefined *we* implies an underlying assumption of unity that is often counter to reality." Point taken.

Test writers are equally rule bound in their treatment of subject matter. Items cannot deal with military topics, sports, religion, hunting, evolution, or any other material that might be "upsetting." In fact, violence is out altogether, with some exceptions that might upset the vegan community. "For example, it is acceptable to discuss the food chain even though animals are depicted eating other animals."

The guidelines wind ever tighter. The number of mentions of men must be balanced by the number of mentions of women. The guidelines stipulate that "20 percent of the items that mention people represent African American people, Asian American people, Latino American people, and/or Native American people." If the item doesn't allow for the test writer to identify people explicitly by race or ethnicity, he should use "place holder names" commonly associated with "various groups": Latisha or Juan or Matsuko. But sometimes a place holder name isn't good enough, for the status of the men or women mentioned in an item must be balanced too: If you mention Albert Einstein in an item, according to the guidelines, you will not achieve gender balance simply by mentioning some anonymous "Emily" or "Imani" in the next item. You need to mention a woman of equivalent status to Einstein. Marie Curie, maybe. Sally Ride. I don't know.

Imagine tiptoeing through this minefield eight hours a day! Oddly the record shows not a single instance when an ETS test writer snapped and started spraying his coworkers with an AK-47. Clearly these are committed professionals, and their good faith is hard to question. But the pressure to satisfy critics is unrelenting. Long before the Americans with Disabilities Act, for instance, test preparers had accommodated people with physical disabilities: kids who couldn't use pencils or keyboards could bring people to fill in the answer sheets for them, for instance, and blind test takers were given tests in Braille or furnished proctors who would read the test aloud. Then the question of "learning disabilities" arrived.

Beginning in the 1990s, activists demanded that students with Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder be granted extra time to complete the test, to place them on a level playing field with other, less distracted test takers. The companies readily agreed, but then were surprised at what the data revealed a few years later: If you give some kids more time to take a test, they will get higher scores than kids who didn't get more time to take the test. So the College Board decided to "flag" these scores as a kind of caveat emptor, to alert admissions officers that the test taker, though claiming a learning disability, might have been given an unfair advantage.

Activists sued for discrimination. By flagging the scores, they said, the ETS and College Board were "stigmatizing" applicants with ADHD. After a half-hearted defense, the companies conceded the point, and flagging was discontinued. Today a kid claiming ADHD can take as much as an extra hour to finish the test.

The generous and seemingly endless concessions drew the most public attention in 1995. SAT sections are graded on a scale of 200 to 800, and average scores had been sinking since the end of World War II. The verbal score had fallen from 501 in 1941 to 425 by 1990; the math score had dropped from 502 to 475 during the same period. One possible reaction to this sorry turn might be a redoubled effort to improve the quality of secondary education, to raise the scores of kids back to the level of their grandparents. Instead, ETS "recentered" the grading system, so

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that a 425 on the old scale became a 501 on the new scale. Everyone was automatically smarter. It's not quite like Lake Wobegon, where all the kids are above average. But the recentering guaranteed that at least as many kids are above average today as 70 years ago.

Many of these adjustments were necessary for technical reasons or reasons of fairness, and certainly they're defensible for reasons of public perception. But in making them, the companies also inadvertently reinforced the premise of their critics. Scholastic aptitude was made to seem an arbitrary concept without grounding in anything real, a fiction subject to endless revision—something that suited the needs of one generation but was now entirely outmoded. The companies seemed to concede the point when they agreed, in 1994, to drop the word "aptitude" from the name of their test.

It was a remarkable concession that would have floored earlier progressives like James Conant or Riesman and Jencks. They never entertained the idea that aptitude was, as one critic put it not long ago, a "tool of repression." They might have asked how it was that first generation Asian immigrant females routinely outperformed native-born white males on a test that native-born white males had supposedly rigged for their own advantage. Those white males weren't as smart as everybody thought.

So if tests no longer measure aptitude, what are they for? The companies have tried to keep their claims modest. Always they have disavowed any grand intention of sorting the American population on the basis of academic ability. Indeed, the only people claiming that the SAT was intended to rank people according to their worth as members of society were SAT critics like the journalists Lemann and Owen, who of course deplored the idea. The grand manifesto of FairTest, the anti-testing activist organization, is titled: "Test Scores Do Not Equal Merit." They don't, of course, but who said they did? Not ETS, not the College Board, and not the dwindling number of disinterested observers who defend the central role of standardized tests in college admissions. The companies have themselves published books and studies attacking what they called the "myth of the single yardstick"—the notion that "there can be one and only one primary ordering of people as 'best qualified.'"

Instead, the College Board says that the SAT does nothing more than measure "developed critical thinking and reasoning skills needed for success in college." To judge whether it succeeds in that task, thousands of statistical and psychometric studies have been done. (The SAT is easily the most pawed-over piece of academic work product in history.) The consensus is that SAT scores do a fairly good job of predicting what kind of grades the student will get in his freshman year—one measure of "success in college." If you consider both his SAT scores and his high school grade point average, you have an even better predictor of how well he'll do in his first year. These findings alone are enough to establish SAT scores as a useful piece of information for admissions officers trying to figure out if an applicant is well suited to their college.

Yet because the achievement gaps persist—no amount of sensitivity tinkering has been able to close them—the calls for downgrading or eliminating the SAT persist. And it's indeed undeniable that wealthier kids and those whose parents went to college get better SAT scores. The law professor Lani Guinier says the SAT should therefore simply be called a "wealth test." Another activist says the test measures nothing but "the size of the student's house." "The only thing that SAT predicts well now is socioeconomic status," one U.C. dean told the *L.A. Times*.

The problem for SAT critics is that the gaps show up far beyond SAT scores. Rebecca Zwick, an education professor at the University of California at Santa Barbara who collected the quotations above from Guinier and the others, writes flatly that it's "impossible to find a measure of academic achievement that is unrelated to family income." Some reformers have moved 180 degrees from Conant and suggest that scores on "achievement tests"—the kind Conant thought unfairly benefited rich boys—should replace SAT scores as the main criterion for admission. Others suggest using high school grade-point-averages alone. Some suggest using a composite number—compiled from high school grades, personal interviews, writing tests, the difficulty of high school course load, and extent of extracurricular activities—to replace the SAT in a school's deliberations. Test-optional colleges are all using one version or another of these alternatives.

Yet each of these markers correlates with family income as much as, and in some cases more than, the SAT. Kids who get high "aptitude" scores also get high "achievement" scores. While grades are a good predictor of college success for middle- and upper-income kids, the validity fades with kids from lower-income backgrounds. The rankings of kids look much the same whether they're measured by aptitude tests, achievement tests, high school grades, writing tests, the difficulty of their course loads, and so on. By the numbers, the bias toward the well to do is hard to budge.

Their frustration has pushed progressive educators to extremities that would have been unthinkable even a generation ago. One statistician, writing in the *Harvard Educational Review*, has suggested that a "corrective scoring method" be applied to the SAT. Not only do different

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

groups perform differently on the SAT, but groups show differences in the kinds of SAT questions they do well on. So his R-SAT grading system would count only the questions on which those groups score well. Ta-da: "The R-SAT," he wrote, "shows an increase in SAT verbal scores by as much as 200 or 300 points for individual minority test takers."

As Karabel showed, when the test scores didn't work out the way the bluebloods wanted back in the old days, they did the obvious thing: They played down the numbers. They went looking for personal qualities they could use in place of aptitude. And of course they found what they were looking for, in hazy notions like "good breeding," "manliness," "All-Americanness"—considerations that would yield the kind of class the old boys were comfortable with, one with fewer undesirable elements. Nowadays, with standardized tests yielding a disproportionate number of Asians and wealthy whites, progressives resort to an updated version of the old blueblood technique. Only now they're using social science to lend an air of statistical precision.

Nowadays, with standardized tests yielding a disproportionate number of Asians and wealthy whites, progressives resort to an updated version of the old blueblood, Ivy League technique of playing down the numbers. Only now they're using social science to lend an air of statistical precision.

The marketers at the College Board have noticed the trend. In keeping with their finely honed instinct for survival, the companies are trying to lead the parade before they get trampled. Last fall College Board researchers announced that they would try to develop standardized tests to measure "noncognitive skills"—attributes beyond the merely intellectual—that could be linked to success in college, tested for, and quantified without resulting in a scoring gap. And it goes without saying that if the College Board could develop such tests, it would be happy to market them to new generations of college goers. "If You Can't Beat 'Em, Join 'Em," read the headline in the trade publication *Inside Higher Ed*.

The College Board's effort is based largely on work already done by psychologists at Michigan State University, who have devised a "12-dimension taxonomy" on which to test students. "Knowledge and mastery of general principles" is only one of the 12. The others include "social responsibility," "interpersonal skills," and "appreciation for diversity." Unfortunately, so far none of their computations has been able to predict college success with anywhere near the reliability of SAT scores. Sliced another way, however, the results are quite pleasing. The College Board calculated that if the 12-dimension scores were used in college admissions at a selective college, the percentage of black students and Hispanic students admitted to the school would more than double. On the other hand, the percentage of Asians would drop by one-third. But who's counting?

An even more ambitious effort is known as the "Rainbow Project," developed by a psychologist named Robert Sternberg, formerly of Yale and now the dean of arts and sciences at Tufts University. Sternberg says he doesn't want to do away with the SAT altogether; he admits its predictive value. But he is also candidly trying to find a way to admit more black and Hispanic applicants to selective colleges, and to do it with some kind of quantifiable support. His goal, he says, is "the creation of standardized test measures that reduce the different outcomes between different groups as much as possible in a way that still maintains test validity." It's a kind of reverse engineering: He knows the results he wants, he just needs the right test to give them to him.

Sternberg's method is pretty straightforward. He's taken the tender-hearted and almost-true bit of grandmotherly wisdom *Everyone is good at something* and stretched it to the breaking point: *Everyone is good at something that will make him a successful college student*. This is the premise of his "triarchic theory of intelligence." Sternberg's thinking is inspired by the well-known work of the Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner, who in 1983 claimed to have identified seven kinds of human intelligence, from bodily-kinesthetic intelligence to intrapersonal intelligence; recently he discovered another intelligence, for a total of eight, though more intelligences may be on the way. Sternberg, more modest, has contented himself with only three—a trio of skills that, when quantified, should be as useful and impressive to college admissions officers as any SAT score.

Sternberg's definitions are highly abstract. *Practical intelligence* involves "skills used to implement, apply or put into practice ideas in real-world contexts." *Creative intelligence* involves "skills used to create, invent, discover, imagine, suppose, or hypothesize." *Analytical intelligence* is closer to more conventional notions of intelligence, and to the aptitude that the SAT has usually been thought to measure. It involves "skills used to analyze, evaluate, judge, or compare and contrast."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following items. Respond to the statements below with your feelings at present or your expectation of how things will be. Write in your answer to the left of each item.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

_____ 11. The university should use its influence to improve social conditions in the state.

_____ 12. It should **not** be very hard to get a B (3.0) average at this school.

_____ 13. I get easily discouraged when I try to do something and it doesn't work.

_____ 14. I am sometimes looked up to by others.

_____ 15. If I run into problems concerning school, I have someone who would listen to me and help me.

_____ 16. There is no use in doing things for people; you only find that you get it in the neck in the long run.

_____ 17. In groups where I am comfortable, I am often looked to as leader.

_____ 18. I expect to have a harder time than most students at this school.

_____ 19. Once I start something, I finish it.

_____ 20. When I believe strongly in something, I act on it.

_____ 21. I am as skilled academically as the average applicant to this school.

_____ 22. I expect I will encounter racism at this school.

_____ 23. People can pretty easily change me even though I thought my mind was already made up on the subject.

_____ 24. My friends and relatives **don't** feel I should go to college.

_____ 25. My family has always wanted me to go to college.

_____ 26. If course tutoring is made available on campus at no cost, I would attend regularly.

_____ 27. I want a chance to prove myself academically.

_____ 28. My high school grades **don't** really reflect what I can do.

_____ 29. Please list offices held and/or groups belonged to in high school or in your community.

_____

_____

_____

The biodata portion of a typical noncognitive test

To measure his intelligences Sternberg has developed a combination of multiple-choice tests, which resemble the SAT, and "performance measures," which do not. Together the testing session can last four hours. You can see why. After taking the multiple-choice test, the student is handed five *New Yorker* cartoons and told to write a fresh caption for each. "Trained judges" (Sternberg's phrase) grade the captions on a five point scale, depending on how original, clever, funny, and "task-appropriate" they are. Then the student is asked to write two stories under such provocative titles as "The Octopus's Sneakers" and "Beyond the Edge." Again trained judges are standing by to rank the responses with a number (one to five).

Then: straight to video. The student watches seven brief vignettes about an everyday problem and chooses one out of six options for how to handle it. His answer is judged, from one to seven, on how well it would solve the problem. Then come two written questionnaires, one measuring "common sense" and another rating reactions to "college life." (Example: How would you deal with a difficult roommate?)

Finally, there's biodata, in which the student grades himself on how hard he studies, how hard he plays, how involved he is in his school. Biodata plays a crucial role in almost all noncognitive tests, as replacement for, or a supplement to, more conventional assessments of aptitude like the SAT. A typical example comes from a test developed at the University of Maryland. Students are asked to rate how strongly they agree with various statements about themselves. "Once I start something, I finish it." "I want a chance to prove myself academically." "When I believe strongly in something, I act on it." The higher the score, the more desirable the kid.

It's odd—more, it's hard to believe—that noncognitive tests such as these are being floated to rival a test, the SAT, which is routinely deemed defective because it is too subjective, too coachable, too imprecise, too clumsy to administer, and too dependent on cultural conventions. What, after all, could be more subjective than rating the humor in the caption of a *New Yorker* cartoon, assuming

FROM "BEYOND THE BIG TEST" BY WILLIAM SEDLACEK

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

you could find any? What's more coachable than asking a kid whether he finishes what he starts? (If he leaves the question blank, you've got your answer.) It only makes sense when you remember that the point of the tests is not their objectivity or precision but the scores that they elicit, particularly from individuals lashed together by race, sex, or income level. Sternberg says he can claim some success in this regard. "Although the group differences in the tests were not reduced to zero," he writes, "the tests did substantially attenuate group differences relative to other measures such as the SAT." Interest in Sternberg's method among admissions officers has been intense.

Anyone who drifts unprepared into psychometric literature will be surprised to discover the platitudes that rise like air sanitizer from even the most impenetrable studies. Huge stretches of Sternberg's work are virtually unintelligible to a layman ("A chi-squared test for differences between sample variance and population variance suggests that variance for the sample for these items … "). And then suddenly you trip over a sentence that might have come from *The Uncollected Polonius*: "Success in life requires one not only to analyze one's own ideas as well as the ideas of others, but also to generate ideas and persuade other people of their value." If Polonius had a master's in sociology: "A balance of skills is needed to adapt to, shape, and select environments."

It's odd that noncognitive tests are being floated to rival a test, the SAT, which is routinely deemed too subjective, too coachable, and too imprecise.

But platitudes—truisms—are everywhere in the anti-SAT literature. Truisms lull the reader so reassuringly that you might miss other stuff that isn't true at all. Martha Allman, Wake Forest's admissions director, announced the school's decision to drop its SAT requirement with self-flattering banalities. "After months of discussion and study and reflection," she said, "we decided it was time to stand up on the side of fairness." Meanwhile, the material Wake Forest issued to support its new test-optional policy was a series of statements that are demonstrably untrue: that SATs aren't good predictors of college success, that they're merely an indicator of socioeconomic status rather than aptitude, that they're a barrier to college for "many well-qualified students," that they're crippled with cultural and racial bias, and so on. Each of these is contradicted by mountains of data and common sense.

The banality and misstatement obscure one truth so obvious that hardly anyone mentions it: If test-optional schools like Wake Forest truly want to admit those "well-qualified students" with low SAT scores, they could just choose to admit them. Admissions officers have access to a vast, multimillion-dollar industry of direct mailers and enrollment management consultants that do nothing all day but help schools find the kinds of applicants they want. And the school could admit them without depriving itself, as a matter of policy, of the valuable information that the SAT provides.

Instead the war on the SAT continues and intensifies. But why?

In addition to the obvious political reasons, there are compelling institutional ones as well. The deans may be progressives, but they're also bureaucrats. A test-optional admissions policy boosts department budgets and staff, since the personal interviews and graded essays used in place of test scores require much more manpower. It also gives a boost in the infamous college rankings published each year by *U.S. News and World Report*. When a school no longer requires the SAT, the number of applications typically increases, but the number of available slots stays the same. So the percentage of acceptances drops. The school suddenly looks more selective, pushing it up the *U.S. News* charts. The incoming class's "average SAT score"—another important measure for *U.S. News*—rises too, since low scorers usually don't submit their scores, leaving the average to be calculated from only the high-scoring applicants.

Best of all, without SAT scores, a dean's discretion is greatly enlarged. He is released from the tyranny of objective numbers. For the progressive admissions director, aching to make his school a gorgeous mosaic of multiculturalism, the SAT must chafe like a manacle. It offers a datum with which outsiders can second-guess his judgment: Why'd you accept Billy with a 1200 SAT and deny Jane with a 1500? He'll face no more questions like that if he can persuade his school to drop the SAT.

Inevitably, I suppose, the demotion of the SAT and what it represents begins to carry a whiff of the same post-modernism that has overtaken the humanities in most elite colleges. We shouldn't be surprised if it's seeped through the ventilators and under the door jambs into the admissions office next door. An attack on the traditional notion of aptitude is also an attack on one long-standing and widely accepted notion of what higher education is for, as a place where academic excellence is pursued both for its own sake and as a preparation for life. If higher ed is not defined this way it's hard to see what it will be defined by—beyond the whims of school presidents and progressive deans. But maybe that's the whole idea. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What Was the CIA Up To?

There's one way to find out: Obama should release the intelligence gained from the interrogations.

By Reuel Marc Gerecht

"This is a delicate business involving some unpleasantness; it must be entrusted to the hands and tongues and pens of men who are completely above suspicion and without self-interest, for the weal or woe of the country depends on them." So wrote Nizam al-Mulk, the great 11th-century Persian vizier about the importance of good intelligence and good intelligence officers. Unfortunately for this cultured, Machiavellian minister, the intelligence wasn't good enough: In 1092 a Shiite holy warrior—a member of the dreaded Assassins—got through his security and knifed the old man to death.

The controversy surrounding the Central Intelligence Agency's use of aggressive interrogation and black sites is probably in its early stages, unfortunately. Unless the American left decides to calm down, we are all in for a tortuous, emotionally wrenching national discussion of the "unpleasantness" involved in counterterrorism. We never really did have a post-9/11 debate about the morality of counterterrorist operations, since both Republicans and Democrats wanted to be unpleasant and preferred not to talk about it. President Bush really should have forced a public discussion—or at least a closed hearing of the congressional intelligence committees—about what the CIA could and could not do in its efforts to gather information about possible catastrophic attacks against the United States and its allies.

If President Bush had done so, we likely would have had a bipartisan consensus in favor of black sites and aggressive interrogation. This consensus still might have changed—and it should change if America's elected representatives determine the threat does not merit harsh counterterrorist methods, or that the interrogation methods used are ineffective. But at least we would likely now be less partisan and more careful about casting stones. Liberal pundits and publications, who have made surreal slippery-slope parallels juxtaposing 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (KSM) with Jacobo Timerman and Soviet dissidents, and the Bush administration with the Argentine junta and the KGB, might have drawn more complicated pictures of the collision of good and evil after 9/11. Now on both the Democratic and Republican sides, we have, as with the Iraq war, more often forgetfulness and hypocrisy. President Bush's and Vice President Cheney's mania for secrecy and executive prerogative did neither them nor the country any favors.

Although President Obama may parade his virtuousness too prominently, he is undoubtedly right that part of the superpower strength of the United States is in our national character. Statecraft that damages the country's soul weakens the heart and will of its citizenry—especially when it comes to the unavoidably ugly task of waging war against America's enemies. It really isn't *that* important whether the Germans or Egyptians think well of us—the former will not fight in Afghanistan regardless of Barack Obama's efforts to restore our "honor," and the latter's police-state security service, with whom the administration has a fairly close intelligence-liaison relationship, could not care less who we waterboarded however many times. But it does matter a lot whether America's liberal foreign-policy establishment is willing to combat Islamic radicalism aggressively. A guilt-ridden America isn't a particularly daunting foe.

There is something fundamentally impressive—even at this late date—in Americans' having a big, brawling debate about how we should combat Islamic terrorism. Although the Supreme Court is on the verge of giving the protection of the Geneva Conventions to KSM and his kind, it's still not too late for the war-making branches of government and the citizenry to debate whether the Geneva Conventions are appropriate for combating mass-casualty terrorism. But like President Bush, President Obama isn't interested in debates about this issue. The president and senior congressional Democrats simply assert that we are safer because we no longer put senior members of al Qaeda through the wringer. A "false choice between our security and our ideals" isn't necessary.

Reuel Marc Gerecht, a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard, *is a former case officer in the CIA's Directorate of Operations.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Okay. But wouldn't it be better if before making such a flat statement that the president and his team, let alone a more objective blue-ribbon, bipartisan commission, had assessed the 6,000 intelligence reports produced from the interrogation of CIA detainees? Isn't it just possible that these individuals were more truthful and more talkative because they received Langley's special attention?

Shouldn't the White House at least digest the 3,000 intelligence reports produced between September 11, 2001, and April 2003, from the CIA's "high value detainees"—that is, the folks who most likely passed through the agency's black sites? How in the world can the president be so certain so quickly that aggressive interrogation doesn't work? One may conclude that sleep deprivation, walling, or waterboarding is morally repugnant, even when committed against holy warriors who incinerate skyscrapers, but that does not necessarily mean that these procedures are ineffective (or criminal). Critics of these programs may counter that we will never know whether KSM would have cracked if the CIA had just followed the Marquess of Queensberry debriefing rules and emphasized empathy and fraternity over pain. Maybe. But the evidence—so far—suggests that the CIA tried that path first.

It's difficult to assess the utility of waterboarding. The CIA is a mediocre institution capable of considerable exaggeration and deceit to cover up its own weaknesses and poor performance.

Vice President Cheney, in his call for declassifying the intelligence gained from the interrogations, is right: The public—or a blue-ribbon commission—should look at all the evidence that it possibly can before concluding that physical pain is ineffective, or even counterproductive, in al Qaeda interrogations. Liberals are usually biased in favor of declassification; they should be so even when they find themselves uncomfortably aligned with Dick Cheney. President Obama should err on the side of the public and declassify aggressively all the memoranda surrounding the black sites and the CIA's special methods. Declassify, as much as possible, the thousands of intelligence reports produced by CIA detainees. It is likely much—if not most—of this information is no longer sensitive. Let the court of public opinion decide whether the morals-lost/intelligence-gained ratio favors President Obama or President Bush. As it stands now, it's hard not to conclude that those who are so certain that aggressive interrogation is useless do so because they fear being in the more precarious position of expressing outrage against dark tactics that may have saved thousands of American lives.

It's difficult to have a firm idea of whether Vice President Cheney's assertions about the utility of waterboarding are true. The CIA is a mediocre institution capable of considerable exaggeration and deceit to cover up its own weaknesses and poor performance. When I was in the clandestine service, I regularly saw case officers stretch the truth about the value of counterterrorist operations and human-source intelligence reporting. A few times, I saw senior executive-branch officials accept at face value the views of senior operations officers that were, to put it politely, at odds with the truth. There may have been considerable "stretching" about the value of aggressive-interrogation intelligence. Vice President Cheney may have taken some intelligence memos at face value, where he should have been skeptical.

On the other hand, it may be that CIA interrogators performed their work well, and the vice president knows exactly what he's talking about. We need to find out. It's quite likely that during Barack Obama's presidency, American military or intelligence units will get their hands on another "high-value" jihadist. The man may well have information about an imminent attack against U.S. civilians. Before that happens, it would be good to have a better idea of the risks President Obama is assuming by forsaking aggressive interrogation.

For now, it looks like the president may have created a moral train wreck for himself, and for the country, with the publication of these memos. Barack Obama appears to be emotionally in the camp with those who believe that the black sites and enhanced interrogations were sinful ("a dark and painful chapter in our history")—that President Bush, Vice President Cheney, the Justice Department lawyers, and the CIA officers who approved and conducted the interrogations were unquestionably guilty of torture. With the exception of high treason, it's difficult to imagine a more heinous charge against an American official. Yet Obama doesn't want to follow through on the logic of his convictions. He says he wants "reflection, not retribution"—at least for CIA officers involved with "torture." The case is not so clear for former Justice lawyers John Yoo and Jay Bybee, who appear to be at the top of the Obama administration's most-immoral list.

Morally and legally, President Obama's position makes little sense. If U.S. officials are guilty of serious crimes,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they should be prosecuted. The notion that CIA officers should escape criminal prosecution because they thought they were following legal orders flies in the face of the historic understanding that soldiers must not obey illegal commands. It will be outrageous cowardice if a Democratic Congress, or the administration, decides to seek the heads of Yoo and Bybee and not seek the prosecution of President Bush, Vice President Cheney, George Tenet, Condoleezza Rice, and others higher up.

And President Obama's actions are likely to cause collateral damage abroad. If the European left continues in the direction it's going, we could soon see a slew of cases filed in third countries against U.S. officials, charging them with war crimes and other human rights offenses. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, whose husband began the extraordinary rendition of Islamic terrorist suspects, may have an acute appreciation of the hideously time-consuming diplomatic mess she could soon find herself in if this happens. Try talking seriously about NATO and Afghanistan if in the background feisty and politically independent Spanish, Belgian, or Italian magistrates are issuing arrest warrants for former U.S. officials. Yet the White House and the leadership of the Democratic Congress are—so far—heedlessly feeding anti-American forces in Europe that could easily derail this administration's efforts to improve transatlantic relations.

Aggressive interrogation is ugly—though far from barbaric, as the released memoranda clearly reveal (Justice and CIA officials were aggressively solicitous of the detainees' well-being throughout).

For those who suspect that aggressive interrogation was a highly valuable, morally justifiable counterterrorist tool, there is really no choice but to energetically counter the president's efforts to declare the case closed, guilty as charged. The preeminent issue now is to try to learn whether aggressive interrogation produced real intelligence value. If it did not, then no one should defend it or the decision of the Bush administration to continue and seek legal justification for the practice once it became clear that substantial, lifesaving information was not being produced. If the evidence is not at all clear on the question, then all pushes ought to go to Obama. Aggressive interrogation is ugly—though far, far from barbaric, as the released memoranda clearly reveal (Justice and CIA officials were aggressively solicitous of the detainees' well-being throughout). Americans should not deploy rough tactics except in extremis.

And the American right has been much too quick in its high dudgeon about the possible operational compromises wrought by the publication of these memos. It's hard to see how this information in al Qaeda's hands would aid the organization in countering future American interrogations. My junior-officer class in the clandestine service had an excellent idea of what was awaiting it in a three-day "jail" training exercise—a program that was the model for the Bush administration's enhanced interrogation techniques. Even the former Delta Force and Navy Seals in our group, who had already experienced truly harsh survival training, found it a shock when they hit the freezing cold, the mind-scrambling electronic noise, the small boxes into which we were stuffed, and the sleep deprivation. Even the best mental and physical preparation for such an experience tends to fade quickly as the all-engulfing loneliness, fatigue, and pain of the here-and-now sets in.

And the CIA's most critical counterterrorist operations overseas will likely be unscathed by this controversy at home. The same methodology that case officers have been using since 9/11 to penetrate al Qaeda will continue. They will become neither more timid nor more bold. The odds of a "unilateral" (CIA-only) recruitment inside the inner circles of al Qaeda will remain as before: unlikely. Although it is possible that this controversy, if it mushrooms, could make some European liaison services again nervous about the disclosure of joint post-9/11 European-American rendition efforts, it's not likely that any new revelations would be crippling. France and Great Britain—our two key European intelligence allies against Islamic terrorism—are wedded to us for many reasons. Chief among them that they, unlike us, confront at home the constant plotting of domestically nourished radical Islamists. European security and foreign intelligence services are not especially perturbed by President Bush's publicly deplored counterterrorist efforts.

The overriding issue is to learn whether this whole affair is about something operationally real. If so, then President Obama, by shutting down aggressive interrogations and driving CIA officers away from acquiring the requisite special skills for its use, may well be putting the country at risk. But if we find out that the president is right, then there should, quite rightly, be hell to pay. We should not have gone through all this "unpleasantness" for nothing. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Be Politically Incorrect!

Sport your opinionated style with our new ***Weekly Standard*** merchandise! Great as gifts or keep them for yourself!

BASEBALL CAP

Show which team you're on with a *Weekly Standard* baseball cap

the weekly Standard

POLO SHIRT

Wear your politics on your sleeve with an embroidered Weekly Standard logo polo. (Available in white and navy)

HEAVY-DUTY GOLF UMBRELLA

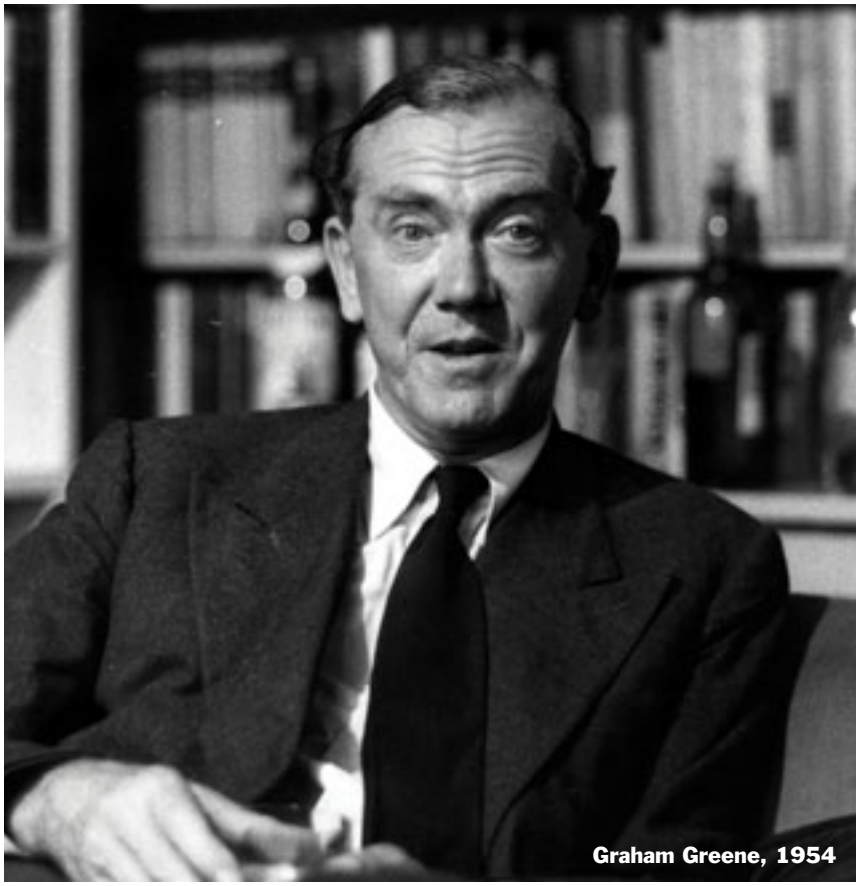
Brave the political storms under our nylon golf umbrella

THE BILL & FRED COFFEE MUG

Start your morning off "right" with this 19 oz. coffee mug

Order today at ***weeklystandardstore.com!***
or call us toll-free at **1-866-869-6389!**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED


Graham Greene, 1954

The Man Within

Graham Greene and his correspondence.

BY MICHAEL DIRDA

Nobody, as the literary scholar Samuel Hynes once observed, has ever wanted to be a Graham Greene character.

His men and women are murderers, traitors, unhappy adulterous lovers, sinners of every stripe—and he doesn't glamorize their seediness, their misery, or their desperation. Evelyn Waugh bluntly called them "charmless." Nearly all of them dwell in a shadowy fictive world of hunter and hunted, where love itself leads mainly to anguish and loss. Nonetheless, even Greene's "entertainments," such as *This Gun for Hire* and *The Third Man*, are more than just tautly written thrillers of revenge or pursuit: In the distance one can usually make out the baying of Francis Thompson's Hound of Heaven: *I fled Him, down the nights and down the days; / I fled Him, down the arches of the years; / I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways / Of my own mind . . . .*

After the death of Henry James, according to Greene, "the religious sense was lost to the English novel, and with the religious sense went the sense of the importance of the human act." Consequently, Greene's own work—especially the major books of what one might call his middle period: *Brighton Rock*, *The Power and the Glory*, *The Heart of the Matter*, and *The End of the Affair*—sought to reinvest contemporary fiction with moral seriousness, to depict solid and real people trapped in life-or-death ethical dilemmas and racked by guilt and despair.

Graham Greene
A Life in Letters
Edited by Richard Greene
Norton, 480 pp., $35

Anyone needing a quick summary of the Greenean view of the world need only look to the first and last sentences of *The Third Man*. It opens: "One never knows when the blow will fall," and closes: "Poor Crabbin. Poor all of us, when you come to think of it." To this gloomy assessment of our fragile human condition the only possible counterweight lies in what the priest of *Brighton Rock* calls "the awful strangeness of the mercy of God."

For more than half a century Graham Greene (1904-1991) supplied disquieting reports and updates from this bleakly desolate "Greeneland," wherever it might be temporarily located on the map: Mexico (*The Power and the Glory*), Africa (*The Heart of the Matter*), Southeast Asia (*The Quiet American*), Cuba (*Our Man in Havana*), South America (*The Honorary Consul*). Yet while the troubled locales might vary, the quality of Greene's artistry remained uniformly high. Even a relatively late novel, *The Human Factor* (1978), has been ranked by a standard study of the espionage thriller as the greatest spy story of mod-

Michael Dirda is the author, most recently, of Classics for Pleasure.

KURT HUTTON / GETTY IMAGES

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ern times; *Travels with My Aunt* revealed its author as a master of black humor.

Over the years Graham Greene's many books have sold more than 20 million copies, and movies, often very fine movies, have been made from virtually all of them. One can even point to a latter-day "school of Greene," whose members have included such distinguished writers as Anthony Burgess, V. S. Naipaul, John le Carré, and Paul Theroux, all of them having worked variations on the Master's signature theme: the intersection of erotic, spiritual, and political treachery.

The Master? Greene, I suspect, would be honestly pleased by the comparison to Henry James, whose work he revered. After all, both writers repeatedly depicted innocence deceived and burnt-out cases and the high cost of illusions. Yet there's still another likeness between them. In one of his later essays Cyril Connolly—that moody epicurean of letters—confessed that he had attained a stage in life when he would rather read *about* Henry James than actually read or reread any of Henry James's fiction. Something similar seems to be happening to Greene: We've grown obsessed with the man himself.

Norman Sherry's massive three- volume biography—not a slice but a slab of life, almost a marble slab—piles on the details, going so far as to include the title of the child care book that Greene's mother consulted during the writer's infancy. Michael Shelden's *The Enemy Within* notoriously accuses, or at least suspects, Greene of every sort of perfidy, from sacrilege (sex in churches) to murder. William Cash's *The Third Woman* offers a detailed account of Greene's long-sustained passion for the married Catherine Walston, a pantherine beauty hungry for much more than what Sarah, in *The End of the Affair*, calls "ordinary corrupt human love." There have been other biographical accounts, too (by Anthony Mockler, for instance) and memoirs by friends, including one by Greene's confessor, Fr. Leopoldo Duran.

The publication of such personalia actually started even before Greene's death. Besides his three volumes of reminiscence (*A Sort of Life*, *Ways of Escape*, and *Reflections*) Greene himself brought out—it was his last book—a descriptive "diary" of his dreams called *A World of My Own*. Just a few years previous, *Yours, Etc.* offered the best of Greene's many letters to the press (invaluably annotated by editor Christopher Hawtree). Along with serious statements about human rights and censorship, that selection included Greene's several prize-winning entries to various *New Statesman* competitions asking for parodies of—Graham Greene. Consider just one priceless line: "The nursery maid of the day (our mother changed them with the frequency of young girls in a Grand Bassa brothel) crunched by on the gravel, her thighs sleek as a cat's."

From these letters one can also learn the histories of the tongue-in-cheek Anglo-Texan Society and the even more outrageous John Gordon Society, ostensibly dedicated to combating pornography in English literature and culture. Greene, for all his dourness and melancholy, had a taste for practical jokes.

And now comes *Graham Greene: A Life in Letters*. The novelist once estimated that he wrote 2,000 letters every year. Out of such plenty editor Richard Greene (no relation to his subject) has picked several hundred of the best and added commentary and footnotes to create a kind of potted biography. The result is an enjoyable book that any admirer of Greene's work will want to read. And yet it's not a wholly satisfactory volume: As a biography it simply skims over too much to be more than a précis of a life.

More seriously, Greene simply isn't all that good a letter-writer. In the novels his prose has always been somewhat drab, befitting his often doleful subject matter, but that plainness can be readily overlooked because of the cinematic vividness of his scene-setting and the lived intensity of his characters. In correspondence, where Greene can't rely on such compensations, he often sounds tired or anemic. He's certainly not in the class of the witty Evelyn Waugh or the provocative George Orwell.

That doesn't mean these pages lack interest. For instance, even a subtle analyst of *eros* and *agape* can write soppy nonsense in his love letters. Here's the opening of one from 1934 to his wife Vivien: "Darling best dearest most adored Puss Willow. I do hope you are having a nice time & seeing plenty of people & things. Your Wuffle misses you." Despite (or perhaps because of) such Pooh-like affection, Greene generally preferred his sex outside the home: He not only frequented brothels on his travels but also entered into long-term liaisons with a half-dozen women. Life was kept strictly compartmentalized until the day that Vivien accidentally intercepted a letter intended for Catherine Walston. Greene tried to explain himself with this honest, if also self-serving, apologia:

> The fact that has to be faced, dear, is that by my nature, my selfishness, even in some degree by my profession, I should always, & with anyone, have been a bad husband. I think, you see, my restlessness, moods, melancholia, even my outside relationships, are symptoms of a disease & not the disease itself, & the disease, which has been going on ever since my childhood & was only temporarily alleviated by psycho-analysis, lies in a character profoundly antagonistic to ordinary domestic life. Unfortunately the disease is also one's material. Cure the disease & I doubt whether a writer would remain. . . . So you see I really feel the hopelessness of sharing a life with anyone without causing them unhappiness & disillusion—if they have any illusions.

Little wonder that Greene repeatedly extolled "the virtue of disloyalty." A writer, he believed, should be everywhere and always a naysayer and a gadfly, the devil's advocate, proffering allegiance only to truth and art. Greene himself almost relished pointing out the shortcomings in his own work, remarking of *The End of the Affair*: "I know what's wrong, but the book's finished & I can't bring myself to write new scenes." His first two novels, he insists, were "of a badness beyond the power of criticism properly to evoke." Even what is widely viewed as his masterpiece was liable to disparagement. Speaking of Japanese novelist Shusaku Endo's *Silence*, Greene wrote: "A marvelous book—so much better than my own *Power and the Glory*."

While Greene's first novel was published in 1929, he didn't really begin to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

make any money from his fiction until 1938 when he brought out *Brighton Rock*, the story of a punk gang leader named Pinkie. Throughout the 1930s and '40s he kept busy as a literary roustabout. He was a regular movie reviewer for various publications including the *New Yorker*-like *Night and Day*, and it was in its pages that he asserted that certain middle-aged men and clergymen "responded" to Shirley Temple's "well-shaped and desirable little body." (An expensive lawsuit followed.)

For many years he also turned out film scripts for producer Alexander Korda and director Carol Reed, most famously *The Third Man*, later claiming that its success was due to the zither music and acknowledging that Orson Welles came up with the famous "cuckoo-clock" speech. Throughout the 1950s he wrote plays—once slamming his star, Ralph Richardson, for overacting in *Carving a Statue*—and frequently took on assignments from magazines. But no matter where he traveled or how chaotic his private life, Greene would produce 500 words of fiction a day, or more. He sometimes wondered how people who weren't writers managed to get through all the storms and sorrows of life.

Yet, as these letters remind us, Greene also found refuge in one other lifelong passion. While he opened his most celebrated essay, "The Lost Childhood," by claiming that "perhaps it is only in childhood that books have any deep influence on our lives," Greene himself never lost his enthusiasm for reading and book collecting. Few modern novelists have been such ardent bookmen.

In 1936 he writes to his brother Hugh: "A thousand thanks for the Book Token. I collected a shelf-ful of books this Christmas. A very nice old collection of Gibbon in 12 volumes and the new Boswell from Vivien—oh, and Bryant's anthology of Restoration letters, Frost's poems and Dylan Thomas's, and *Rare Poems of the 17th century*, and the *Letters of Byron*." While working as an intelligence officer in Sierra Leone in 1942 he notes, "I'm leaving *The Eustace Diamonds* till my railway journey. I ration myself to one Trollope a month which will take me through November."

When, in 1950, Waugh presents him with a deluxe edition of his novel *Helena*, Greene writes back: "I shall now have to buy a reading copy though because one can't mark a limited edition," noting that he uses vertical lines in the margin to indicate approval and wavy lines for disapproval. That same year he sends a fan letter to Sir Osbert Sitwell about Sitwell's five-volume autobiography, *Right Hand, Left Hand!*—"Thank you so much for completing a set which I value more, I think, than any other book of my time—Proust is before my time!"—and in 1964 he writes to Kurt Vonnegut: "I first read *Cat's Cradle* when it was published over here by Gollancz and then searched second-hand booksellers' catalogues to find two other of your books, *Player Piano* and *The Sirens of Titan*. I've enjoyed them all immensely."

Little wonder that Greene repeatedly extolled "the virtue of disloyalty." A writer, he believed, should be everywhere and always a naysayer and a gadfly, the devil's advocate, proffering allegiance only to truth and art.

In 1979 he informs Muriel Spark that *Territorial Rights* is "your best, your very best. I thought you'd never top *Memento Mori*, but you have," and in 1985 he compliments Roald Dahl on his memoir *Boy*, adding how much he looks forward to the sequel.

As is well known, Greene championed the fiction of the Indian writer R.K. Narayan and the Irish novelist Brian Moore. But he also enjoyed Erle Stanley Gardner's Perry Mason mysteries; in one letter to Waugh it is clear that the two friends have been speculating about Perry Mason's sex life. Greene always loved shockers and mysteries, eventually gathering a notable collection of Victorian detective fiction (with the help of fellow fan, and longtime mistress, Dorothy Glover). Characteristically, after agreeing to introduce a mammoth bibliography describing everything that Arthur Conan Doyle ever published, Greene declares, "One point I would like to make is how good a writer he was apart from the Sherlock Holmes works. I can reread him as I find myself unable to reread Virginia Woolf and Forster, but then I am not a literary man."

Really? Do unliterary men produce *Lord Rochester's Monkey*, a life of the scandalous 17th-century poet, the Earl of Rochester? And do they reread as much as Greene? He tells us that he's enjoyed Waugh's *Decline and Fall* a half-dozen times, and continually returns to Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier*. He mentions being "under the influence of *Moby Dick*, which I never thought to read twice." In 1959 he writes to Catherine Walston that he's "started rereading *David Copperfield*. My goodness, the first two chapters are perfect. I don't believe there's been anything better in the novel—& that includes Proust & Tolstoy. One dreads the moment of failure, for Dickens always sooner or later fails."

That last sentence indicates real critical acumen. When working as an editor of Eyre and Spottiswoode, Greene scrupulously hammers Mervyn Peake for the facetiousness, prolixity, and overwriting in the original manuscript of *Titus Groan*. Peake, after reeling from the shock, reworked his book, now regarded as one of the summits of modern fantasy.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to capture the truth about any man, let alone so elusive and multifaceted a one as Graham Greene. Still, I suspect that Greene would identify, at least partially, with his own summing-up of a writer he deeply admired, Ford Madox Ford:

> I don't suppose failure disturbed him much: he had never really believed in human happiness, his middle life had been made miserable by passion, and he had come through—with his humour intact, his stock of unreliable anecdotes, the kind of enemies a man ought to have, and a half-belief in a posterity which would care for good writing. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Better Off

The mismeasurement of wealth and poverty in America. **BY JOEL SCHWARTZ**

Economic analysis offers an approach to social problems that is at once vitally important and sharply limited. That generalization applies well to this brief monograph by two economists, Christian Broda of the University of Chicago and David E. Weinstein of Columbia.

Broda and Weinstein seek to refute the widespread contention that "the poor are, at best, no better off economically than they were in the early 1980s." To be sure, that contention is supported by seemingly authoritative statistics:

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that between 1979 and 2005 the real hourly wages of workers at the 10th percentile of the wage distribution rose by only 0.2 percent. Moreover, official nationwide poverty rates have remained essentially unchanged from the 1970s, at around 12 percent of all households.

But these statistics are flawed, Broda and Weinstein argue, because they derive from an index—the consumer price index for urban consumers (CPI-U), produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)—that, over time, has dramatically overstated increases in the cost of living—in particular, the cost of living of poor Americans. (The CPI-U, introduced in 1978, is the BLS's main measurement of the cost of living, covering 87 percent of the total population.)

Broda and Weinstein list several problems with the CPI-U. First, it is marked by what is known as "substitution bias." That is, it doesn't sufficiently account for consumers' propensity to switch from goods that have become relatively more expensive to goods that are cheaper. If the price of, say, Fuji apples has gone up, rational consumers switch to, say Jonathan apples. Alternatively, if the price of *all* apples has gone up, rational consumers might then switch to bananas.

Prices, Poverty, and Inequality
Why Americans Are Better Off Than You Think
by Christian Broda and David E. Weinstein
AEI, 63 pp., $15

Second, the CPI-U doesn't sufficiently account for the introduction of new goods into the marketplace, or the improvement in quality characterizing goods that already exist. The personal computer provides an obvious example of a new good that was introduced into the marketplace, which then improved markedly, even as its price fell significantly over time. Remarkably, Broda and Weinstein observe that—of the Universal Product Codes (UPCs) that existed in 2003, identifying items for sale—almost 80 percent did not yet exist in 1994. Similarly, 72 percent of the UPCs that had existed in 1994 disappeared by 2003.

Third, the CPI-U overstates the plight of the poor in that it doesn't consider the fact that rich households pay around 5 percent more than poor households for identical goods. Not surprisingly, the same item will cost more at Lord & Taylor than at Wal-Mart. (Rich people who patronize the former rather than the latter are not necessarily snobs, nor are they acting irrationally: The personal attention that they receive at Lord and Taylor's may well justify the added cost of buying there instead of at Wal-Mart.)

Considering all of these factors, Broda and Weinstein conclude that "the true cost of living for Americans has increased by around one percentage point per year *less* than what is implied by the CPI-U." If we take into account the need to compound that one percentage point for each year, the CPI-U dramatically overstates increases in the cost of living, which is to say that Americans' seemingly stagnant incomes go much further today than one would think. As Everett Dirksen might have put it, a percentage point here, a percentage point there, and sooner or later you're talking about a serious augmentation of purchasing power—and a serious diminution of poverty.

If Broda and Weinstein's reasoning seems familiar, that is because it builds on the 1996 Boskin Commission report, which concluded (for many of the same reasons) that the CPI-U was then overestimating the change in the cost of living by 1.1 percentage points a year. Since the BLS altered its calculation of the CPI-U in response to many of the commission's conclusions, it would have been helpful if Broda and Weinstein had said something about the seeming insufficiency of the post-1996 alterations instituted by the BLS. (They allude to the report at one point but do not discuss the BLS response to it.) Significantly, though, a 2006 article in the *Monthly Labor Review* (a BLS publication) speaks of "a wide belief that an upward bias [in the CPI-U] still exists," citing a 2003 study that estimates the upward bias at 0.9 percent. So Broda and Weinstein are by no means off the mark or out of the mainstream in arguing that the CPI-U continues to overstate inflation by about a percentage point a year.

Thus, correcting for consumers' ability to substitute, and for the introduction of new and better products, Broda and Weinstein maintain that, far from being stagnant, "real wages at the 10th percentile have increased by fully 30 percent since 1979," which means that "the well-being of the poor is substantially greater today than it

Joel Schwartz is an adjunct senior fellow at the Hudson Institute.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was 25 years ago." They estimate that, properly calculated, the poverty rate can be said to have "fallen by 60 percent since 1970."

How persuasive is their argument? On one level, it seems compelling. Given all of the material improvements in American life in the last four decades, on a common sense basis it is hard to believe that poverty today is just as serious as it was in the early 1970s. Consider a statement by Nicholas Eberstadt, himself the author of another recent study of poverty: "A wealth of evidence shows that those who are counted as poor today have dramatically higher living standards than their counterparts in the 1960s." Specifically, poor Americans now spend only one-sixth of their money on food, as opposed to a third in the 1960s—even as obesity has replaced hunger as the main nutritional problem of the poor. Only six percent of America's poor now inhabit what are defined as "crowded" dwellings, versus 25 percent in 1970. And children in poor families today are more likely to have an annual medical checkup than were nonpoor children only 20 years ago.

By depicting poverty as a condition that appears not to have changed (and, in fact, to have worsened slightly) since 1970, the official poverty rate blinds us to real and obvious improvements in the material conditions of the poor. Broda and Weinstein are to be commended for calling to our attention an important piece of evidence that helps account for these improvements.

At the same time, their presentation of poverty is limited in various respects. Let me mention three. First, on a purely economic matter, I have already noted the contention that poor people pay less for the same goods than do rich people. There is, however, a counterargument. It can plausibly be claimed that the poor often pay more than the rich. Poor people, or at least some poor people, lack the funds to buy in bulk, have to pay interest on big-ticket items that they can buy only on the installment plan, or lacking transportation, purchase goods from local stores that charge more than others (perhaps because of shoplifting).

I am willing to believe that the poor who buy at Wal-Mart more than compensate, on balance, for the poor who pay more for the reasons that I have just stated. Still, it would have been nice if Broda and Weinstein had developed their argument by responding to this obvious objection.

The other two limitations point to considerations that economists are less likely to address than other social scientists, an occupational blind spot that was usefully analyzed in Steven Rhoads's excellent *The Economist's View of the World*. Thus Broda and Weinstein assume that the poor are rational economic actors, who "can switch their consumption [from more expensive goods] to those categories of goods whose relative price has fallen." They certainly can, but how many do? No doubt many poor people carefully husband their resources by spending prudently; but it is surely also the case that at least some poor people are poor—or, to be more precise, exacerbate their poverty—because they consume irrationally, spending money on goods that they don't need and spending less than they should on goods that they *do* need.

Given all of the material improvements in American life in the last four decades, on a common sense basis it is hard to believe that poverty today is just as serious as it was in the early 1970s.

Furthermore, the same mental or emotional problems that make someone an irrational consumer would also tend to make him an undesirable employee, lessening if not eliminating his earned income. That consideration is not, however, addressed by Broda and Weinstein. Still more fundamentally, they present (not surprisingly) an exclusively economic picture of poverty which looks only at the material consumption of the poor. "The poor have access to new and better goods," a fact, as they rightly note, that isn't captured by "the observed stability of the official poverty rate."

That argument is both true and important. Still, it is not the entire truth. Man does not live by bread alone, so when we think about poverty in America today, we should be concerned about things other than the material consumption of the poor. To quote again from Eberstadt, who is very much aware of the material improvements in the lives of the poor, the United States can be described as "a country inhabited by large numbers of prosperous paupers" since "crime, dependency, and family breakdown were far more acute" in the early 1990s "than they had been during the Great Depression, when general income levels, and general levels of schooling, were so much lower."

(I grant that crime and dependency—though emphatically not family breakdown—are less severe now than they were when Eberstadt advanced this argument more than a decade ago.)

In short, Eberstadt contended that what is most worrisome about American poverty is its connection to "predictably injurious patterns of individual and parental behavior," which "may account for a great fraction of the domestic problems we confront." Unfortunately, that problematic behavior is not addressed in any way by Broda and Weinstein, whose study of poverty is illuminating but far from comprehensive.

To be fair, though, it's unreasonable to expect comprehensiveness from a 63-page pamphlet. Within that narrow scope, to illuminate one particular aspect of a social problem is no small feat. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

'Laugh Yourself Fat'

Rediscovering the comic superstar of the Depression.

BY HELEN RITTELMEYER

Marie Dressler and director Clarence Brown, 1932

GETTY IMAGES

She was the first actress to appear on the cover of *Time*. She was Franklin Roosevelt's favorite comedian. In *Dinner at Eight*, she was given billing above not one, but *two* Barrymores. And today no one under the age of 60 remembers who she is.

Marie Dressler's obscurity is easy to understand. In her own day it was said that her talent allowed her to "dictate to directors, buy herself diamond bracelets, and let herself get fat—which is one more right than any other screen star can exercise." History has been less kind to this portly, cow-faced actress. In 1930, critics all agreed that she walked away with Greta Garbo's first talkie, *Anna Christie*. Seventy years later, one of Garbo's cigarette butts went for $352 at auction, and Marie Dressler is only just famous enough to appear on a Canadian postage stamp.

A Great Big Girl Like Me
The Films of Marie Dressler
by Victoria Sturtevant
Illinois, 200 pp., $20

But between 1930 and 1933 Marie Dressler was bigger than Chaplin. Her first attempt to make the leap from vaudeville to Hollywood was undermined by bad management and a reputation for left-wing troublemaking, but after her big break in 1930 with *Anna Christie*, she became one of MGM's most reliable box-office draws, especially in films that cast her as a tottering drunk or a comic old dowager. Her winning streak ended with her death in 1934.

She came closest to cementing a permanent legacy with the ensemble comedy *Dinner at Eight*, which ends with Dressler's famous exchange with Jean Harlow. Harlow, playing the crass gold-digger Kitty Packard, mentions to Dressler that she was reading a book the other day. Dressler's exaggerated double-take is straight out of vaudeville. "Yeah, all about civilization or something," Harlow continues. "Do you know that the guy says that machinery is going to take the place of every profession?"

Dressler sizes up the younger woman in a glance and answers, "Oh, my dear, that's something you never need worry about."

An earlier biographer, Matthew Kennedy, summed up Dressler's special appeal: "Her secret was simple but effective—inject some humility into regal characters and some majesty into the downtrodden." Her maternal warmth and knack for physical comedy were perfectly suited to the tastes of an America scraping its way through the Great Depression.

Forget the hemline index; in times of economic trouble, a woman with an ample figure is comforting, especially if she is also a master of vaudevillian slapstick. (The tagline of her film *Reducing*: "You'll Laugh Yourself Fat!") That is what makes Dressler a more interesting subject than any studio-era soubrette; her superstardom says as much about America during the Depression as it does about her.

If *A Great Big Girl Like Me* has a weakness, that's it: Victoria Sturtevant is so quick to attribute Dressler's success to personal genius that she overlooks the historical factors that allowed a homely sexagenarian to eclipse MGM's prettier properties. One generally has to grant first-time authors special dispensation to be in love with their subjects; but in Sturtevant's case, her obvious fascination with Dressler's talent leaves her blind to other, more interesting, reasons for Dressler's success.

Consider her chapter on motherhood. Dressler was a rare exception to Mack Sennett's iron rule that "no joke about a mother ever gets a laugh," and Sturtevant does an excellent job of illustrating just how seriously this rule was taken in Hollywood. Studios

Helen Rittelmeyer is a writer in Washington.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

expected screen mothers to be sentimental pillars of stability, which left very little room for chaotic slapstick or screwball banter.

The hundred insufferable copycats that followed Al Jolson's "Mammy" are mostly forgotten today, but in the first five years of talkies, hymns to maternal self-sacrifice were ubiquitous. Sturtevant quotes Anita Loos's *But Gentlemen Marry Brunettes* (1928): "Dorothy says that if we could only manage to get all the song writers in the world to meet Henry's mother, it would be the quickest way to free the world of Mother songs."

Sturtevant writes that Marie Dressler sidestepped this convention by playing mothers as tricksters whose tricks were all "tricks of self-sacrifice." But the question is not how Dressler was able to combine the archetypes of trickster and mother, but how she managed to get away with it. After all, there was a time when she didn't: *The Callahans and the Murphys* (1927), which was supposed to be Dressler's comeback film, was pulled by MGM precisely because of the uproar over its depiction of Irish motherhood. One telegram referred to a scene of Dressler, as Mrs. Callahan, drunk at a St. Patrick's Day picnic: "[T]his entire sequence has been the butt of most of the Irish societies' complaints because it shows Irish mothers drunk." One man walked out of a showing in New York: "My mother never acted like that!"

It was only later, in films like *Min & Bill* and *Tugboat Annie*, that Dressler's slapstick version of motherhood became popular. What made the difference between 1927 and 1930? There are interesting cases to be made for the importance of the Depression's effect on gender roles—the way women were pushed to the center of the family and thereby made fit subjects for comedy—or for the idea that, when Americans are confronted by real national tragedy, they are less interested in cinematic melodrama.

If you ask Sturtevant, however, Dressler's success was simply the alchemy of genius.

This being an academic study, there is a chapter on Dressler's ambiguous sexuality, a subject on which Sturtevant *does* have quite a bit to say. The facts of Dressler's love life are unclear: She had an early marriage that failed, followed by a common law marriage to her business manager, who never successfully divorced his first wife. During her final years in Hollywood Dressler was friendly with several confirmed lesbians and shared a house with the actress Claire DuBrey in what looked to outsiders like a domestic partnership.

Given that the defining characteristic of lesbian culture in 1930s Hollywood was invisibility, these few details gave Sturtevant plenty to work with—especially since two of Dressler's movies, both of which Sturtevant discusses at length, have plots that revolve around the difficulty of imagining Dressler as a sexual being.

In *Emma* an aging inventor marries his housekeeper (Dressler) shortly before he dies and his children dispute the inventor's will: Marrying his housekeeper and leaving his estate to her, they argue, must surely have been signs of senility. In *Christopher Bean* Dressler plays another housekeeper with a controversial husband, in this case a dead painter whose work has finally come into fashion. Art collectors arrive at the household where Dressler serves in order to find lost masterpieces, but it takes them awhile to think to ask Dressler if she knows where any might be hidden. (In fact, her marriage to the painter, Christopher Bean, had been secret.)

In this second film Dressler's sexual invisibility is something of a blessing. After her secret is revealed, she has to contend with unscrupulous art dealers trying to buy her cherished portraits; things were much easier for her when she was being underestimated. As Sturtevant points out, this is not so different from the situation of a lesbian during the Depression. When the general population preferred to think that the cohabitation of two women was most likely innocent, the women in question had a certain amount of freedom. It is not entirely clear that Dressler belonged to the '30s lesbian subculture, but Sturtevant makes good use out of adopting her as "queer."

Sturtevant also observes about Dressler's political melodramas that, while they revolve around liberal arguments about plutocratic greed, the solutions they prescribe are personal, not political. Dressler saves the day by behaving like a good mother, not by staging a revolution. In a way, *A Great Big Girl Like Me* has the same weakness. Sturtevant seeks to revive Dressler's reputation for personal reasons, not historical ones: "I like Dressler's work" not "Her work is an important part of Hollywood history." Still, Marie Dressler is enough of an anomaly to be of inherent interest, and Victoria Sturtevant has taken the first step in the worthy cause of her rehabilitation. ♦

GETTY IMAGES

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pre-Camelot

History has undermined the verdict of 1960.

BY STEPHEN HESS

Richard Nixon always thought he would not get a fair shake from history: History is written by historians and historians are liberals, he thought. Conversely, John Kennedy, who was everything Nixon was not—rich, handsome, and a Democrat—would be rewarded.

But after nearly a half-century, the verdict may be otherwise—at least on the Kennedy side of the 1960 campaign. So concludes this fourth volume in the excellent series from the University Press of Kansas in which a noted historian is asked to recount a presidential election.

The Real Making of the President
Kennedy, Nixon, and the 1960 Election
by W.J. Rorabaugh
Kansas, 250 pp., $34.95

W.J. Rorabaugh, whose eclectic scholarship includes a book on alcohol consumption in early America, roams far beyond standard works, reaching into campaign biographies, opposition research, memoirs of minor players, and several archival collections, often in search of a gritty quotation.

"The man is a sh—, — a total sh—," said Kennedy of Nixon, after one of their televised debates.

Unfortunately, a good book is soiled by the author's (or publisher's) effort to promote it as a "corrective" to *The Making of the President, 1960* (1961), Theodore H. White's sycophantic portrait of Kennedy, which has long ago been corrected. White, who died in 1986, was a mere journalist—first draft of history and all that—and his book's opening page informs us that "historians" will "tell the story of the quest for power in 1960 in more precise terms" and with a greater wealth of established fact. The importance of White was not his instant insights but his backstage reportage, which created a new and exciting way to cover presidential politics.

In 1960 Vice President Nixon had an easy romp to the Republican nomination, despite a last-minute challenge from New York governor Nelson Rockefeller. Kennedy, a back bench senator, had to find ways to defeat contenders with longer and more distinguished records of public service: Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, Adlai Stevenson, Stuart Symington.

The Kennedy formula, according to Rorabaugh, was an abundance of money, always there in the deep pockets of his father; a professional staff, with talents that included producing speeches rich in contrapuntals while thin on policy details; a sure sense of communicating through the relatively new political medium of television; a glamorous family, complete with movie star brother-in-law, always available to spread the message; and a unique ability to charm reporters into accepting puff answers to tough questions.

Humphrey, when confronted by this juggernaut in Wisconsin, the first key primary state, lamented, "I feel like an independent merchant competing against a chain store."

Moreover, the Kennedy charm was matched by the Kennedy ruthlessness. In the other key primary state, West Virginia, Rorabaugh writes that Franklin Roosevelt Jr.

> was handed a speech that charged, in effect, that Humphrey had been a draft dodger in World War II. Roosevelt balked, refusing to say anything so mean, nasty, and untrue. . . . Robert Kennedy put heavy pressure on Frank Roosevelt . . . and Roosevelt, rumored to be financially strapped, finally agreed to make the false charge. He did so not once but several times. . . . After the damage had been done, John Kennedy sanctimoniously disavowed Roosevelt's slur.

Later, as the convention neared, a Johnson surrogate charged that Kennedy suffered from Addison's disease, a potentially fatal illness. This was promptly denied by Kennedy's physician, Janet Travell. A "brazen lie," writes Rorabaugh: "As Doctor Travell revealed in her oral history opened more than 30 years later, Kennedy did have Addison's and was being treated for

Stephen Hess, a member of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's staff in 1960, is the author, most recently, of What Do We Do Now? A Workbook for the President-Elect *(Brookings).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the disease with cortisone derivatives."

At the Los Angeles convention, over strong opposition from important parts of the party, as well as his own staff, Kennedy chose Johnson to be his running mate, a story nicely told by Rorabaugh, who then adds the book's most important chapter on how Johnson held the reluctant South (and victory) for Kennedy.

In the general election both Kennedy and Nixon were moderates with little enthusiasm for ideology, which is fine if you win and potentially decisive in a loser's party. Rorabaugh's assessment of Nixon: bad strategic judgment, weak staff. Against President Eisenhower's advice, he agreed to the first televised debates in presidential campaign history. Part of Nixon's problem was that he had been recently hospitalized for a serious infection, had lost considerable weight, and looked on TV like a man whose suit was a size too big. He also lost time and started playing catch-up, racing around the country to honor a foolish pledge to wage a 50-state campaign instead of concentrating on decisive states.

Religion had to be the election's biggest question mark, given that Kennedy might become the first Roman Catholic president. The issue was squarely addressed by Kennedy in his brilliant speech before the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, and the campaign sliced the speech into short commercials and bought time on television in largely Catholic areas. Would additional Catholics come out to vote for Kennedy, or would additional Protestants come out to vote against him? In the end, Rorabaugh concludes, the vote was "offsetting" and "the overall effect was *no* net religious vote in 1960."

Race also figured in the campaign when Martin Luther King was jailed in Georgia. Kennedy called Coretta King, then six months pregnant: "This must be pretty hard on you," he told her, "and I want to let you know that I'm thinking about you and will do all I can to help." When reporters asked Kennedy why he had made the call, according to Rorabaugh, "the nominee said simply that [Mrs. King] was a friend of the family. This was an almost comical lie, but it had political utility. The two had never met and, in fact, never did."

The final tally showed Kennedy receiving 49.7 percent of the total and Nixon receiving 49.6 percent. Rorabaugh makes the case that the election was stolen for Kennedy in Texas and Illinois, but since there was no legal way to get a recount in Texas, and it was not to Nixon's advantage to throw the election into the House of Representatives, he chose not to contest it.

What, then, is history's verdict on the 1960 campaign, at least if *The Real Making of the President* reflects the consensus of academic historians? Fascinating election, yes; defining election, no. Otherwise history reminds us that gloss ultimately tarnishes. ♦

Dr. Franklin's Remedy

Improvement, not transformation, in a practical world.

BY JAMES SEATON

Celebrated in popular culture, Benjamin Franklin has gotten short shrift from academics in recent decades, according to Alan Houston. In *Benjamin Franklin and the Politics of Improvement* he argues that Franklin has been neglected by historians and political scientists because he was "neither a 'classical republican' nor a 'Lockean liberal.'" Franklin, that is, did not base his political philosophy on Locke's theory of the social contract nor did he accept the guiding notion of what intellectual historians have come to call "classical republicanism," the idea that "a stable and successful polity rested on moral purity and selfless devotion to the commonwealth."

Benjamin Franklin and the Politics of Improvement
by Alan Houston
Yale, 336 pp., $35

Houston suggests that the dominance of these two categories is explained not only by their explanatory value for the past but their popularity among academics as answers to our current dilemmas: "To some, the central task facing contemporary Americans is preserving the nation's liberal heritage; to others, only the revival of long-dormant republican ideals can return the polity to good health."

What Houston calls Franklin's "politics of improvement" lacks both the principled commitment to individual rights of Lockean liberalism and the appeal to traditional moral standards of classical republicanism. Instead, argues Houston, Franklin "spoke the language of improvement: of profit and gain, progress and perfection, increase and expansion, benefit and amelioration." His vocabulary, if not suited to making high-minded moral claims, was an effective tool in persuading groups and individuals to work together in public or private enterprises.

Franklin spoke "the language of commercial society," and Houston stakes his claim to Franklin's relevance on "the simple fact that he and we live in commercial societies, in which cooperative relationships are (or ought to be) based on the ability of men and women to respond to each other's needs and interests."

There is something refreshing about a professor of political science, especially one from the University of California at San Diego where Herbert Marcuse once held forth, declaring without evident dismay that it is a "simple fact" that we, like Franklin,

James Seaton is professor of English at Michigan State.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

live in a "commercial society." Houston commends a Benjamin Franklin who wasted no time lamenting the supremacy of commerce in his world but instead "focused his attention on the possibilities and pitfalls of that world."

Houston's Franklin provides little guidance for those who wish to leave "commercial society" behind in search of a world where there are no more rich or poor. If, however, we are interested in learning how to negotiate and even improve the world we actually live in, then Franklin's relevance is clear: "As long as we share [the world of commercial society] with him, we will find meaning in his ideas and actions."

Houston acknowledges Franklin's reputation has suffered not only from academic neglect but also from the disdain of literary types such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mark Twain, and D.H. Lawrence. Hawthorne, anticipating Max Weber, found that Franklin's Poor Richard was "all about getting money, or saving it." Twain described Poor Richard's advice as "inspired flights of malignity" against boys, offering as a prime example the maxim *Early to bed and early to rise / Make a man healthy, wealthy and wise*: "As if it were any object to a boy to be healthy and wealthy and wise on such terms." Lawrence sneered at Franklin's view of the self and his plans for self-improvement: "The soul of man is a vast forest, and all Benjamin intended was a neat back garden."

Houston does not mention Van Wyck Brooks's designation of Franklin as the quintessential American "lowbrow" whose focus on "unmitigated practice" was matched by the "unmitigated theory" of Jonathan Edwards, Brooks's quintessential "highbrow." In his influential manifesto *America's Coming-of-Age* (1915), Brooks argued that Franklin and Edwards between them had shaped a culture in which theory and practice remained walled off from one another.

Houston, noting that most of the critics focus focus on *Poor Richard's Almanac* and Franklin's autobiography, answers that Franklin is not to be identified with "Poor Richard," nor can Franklin's thought and interests be accurately estimated by those who know him only by those two works. Houston's implicit answer is this book-length portrait of Franklin "as a public intellectual" writing to persuade rather than to reflect. For Houston, Franklin's actions and goals are at least as important as his writings in understanding his thought, and the writings are to be understood mainly in relation to their usefulness in achieving a practical end rather than as ends in themselves.

Houston's portrait of Franklin's eventful life certainly makes it clear that the narrow view of Franklin as "Poor Richard" is a caricature. Yet the effort to claim a distinctive philosophy for Franklin as a proponent of "the politics of improvement" requires that, sooner or later, one identifies the standard according to which improvement is judged. Houston repeatedly offers "utility" as the standard of judgment. Thus, Franklin sees that the ability of human beings to work together "rests on utility, on the ability of men and women, or colonies and states, to be useful to each other."

Benjamin Franklin by Charles Willson Peale

FRANCIS G. MAYER / CORBIS

For Franklin "utility was the goal" in every area of life, so much so that "the value of an opinion or conjecture was determined by its utility." Yet the problem with "utility" as a standard is that one is still left asking: useful for what? Jeremy Bentham's utilitarianism offers quantities of pleasure and pain as the ultimate terms for judging usefulness, but there is no evidence that Franklin was committed to an early version of Bentham's madly reductive, though consistent, philosophy.

Houston does not attempt to explicate Franklin's ultimate terms directly, but the indirect answer suggested by this book as a whole is that Franklin simply accepted the values of the "commercial society" of his time and sought to make improvements within its framework when and where possible.

Houston thus leaves open the question as to whether Franklin's acceptance of those values was based on an unthinking failure to question, or the result of thoughtful analysis. Possibly Franklin accepted the values of commercial society in much the same spirit in which he accepted the final draft of the Constitution—not because of any certainty about its goodness but skepticism about the superiority of the alternatives: "Thus I consent, Sir, to this Constitution because I expect no better, and because I am not sure that it is not the best."

This view is supported by Jerry Weinberger's recent *Benjamin Franklin Unmasked* (2005), which contends that, in contrast to Houston's emphasis on "what Franklin *did* as well as *said*," the "philosophical Franklin was the real Franklin." Weinberger's close analysis of Franklin's writings presents Franklin as "a radical and nondogmatic skeptic" who never stopped questioning all things, including his own critiques.

Though Houston and Weinberger use different methods to understand Franklin, their conclusions about his attitudes are quite similar. Weinberger would agree with Houston that "Franklin had a 'projecting public Spirit' and conceived of his activities using the concept of improvement and the language of commercial society." Similiarly, Houston would agree with Weinberger that Franklin's representative Americanism does not lie in his "American idealism" but rather in his being the "American as practical booster, example of the second chance and the clean slate, and enthusiast for modernity—liberty, invention, and opportunity for those born with nothing but their brains."

And if commercial society can still encourage "liberty, invention, and opportunity," Houston may well be right to offer Franklin's unpretentious "politics of improvement" as a plausible alternative to seductive calls for a politics of transformation. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Well Bred, Well Fed . . .

If John Cheever had invented an Episcopal bishop, he would have been Paul Moore. **BY MARK TOOLEY**

The Episcopal bishop Paul Moore of New York was a wealthy scion and Yale graduate, World War II Marine hero, handsome, tall, brilliant, magnetic, devoted to the poor, and married to a woman who was herself beautiful and rich, with whom he had nine children. He marched with Martin Luther King and railed against the Vietnam war and nuclear weapons, winning him the acclaim of fashionable opinion not only in his New York diocese but across the nation. He retired in 1989 and died in 2003. But it was not until this memoir by his daughter, the poet Honor Moore, that his not-so-closeted bisexuality was fully, publicly disclosed.

The Bishop's Daughter
A Memoir
by Honor Moore
Norton, 384 pp., $16.95

Honor Moore's memoir is about her complex father and her complex history with him, her mother, stepmother, the Episcopal Church, and her own complicated emotional and sexual life which, like the bishop's, has been bisexual. After this book was excerpted in the *New Yorker*, three of Honor Moore's eight siblings publicly denounced her exposure of Bishop Moore's sexual secrets. But she insists her other siblings support her, and prominent reviewers have acclaimed her narrative.

Ascribing to her priestly, charismatic father almost "supernatural" powers, Moore was initially disgusted by her father's promiscuity and betrayals of her mother, whose depression had eventually confined her to an asylum. But her disappointment was mingled with continued enchantment, and she employs her father's larger-than-life story to explain her own journey before and after his death.

The enchantment was understandable. Bishop Moore, filling pulpits with his flowing robes and booming voice, speaking the cadence of King James English amid the organ blasts, was a powerful presence to anyone, especially an admiring daughter: "In the sacristy, my father left being a father and a husband to become someone more like God, God who had a son but no daughters, God who had had a son without touching a woman," she recalls.

It's tempting to dismiss *The Bishop's Daughter* as one more Episcopal psychosexual melodrama. But Honor Moore's descriptive prose is tightly poetic and tells a story that opens a sad window into what was once the Protestant elite. "My father always wanted me to write about him," she wrote just two weeks after his death.

Paul Moore was converted to High Church Anglicanism while an adolescent at St. Paul's School. While studying at Yale he joined the Marine Corps and fought heroically at Guadalcanal, swimming a river to rescue two fellow Marines while under Japanese machine-gun fire. Later, he led bayonet charges and was wounded by a Japanese hand grenade. Even when injured he urged his unit on until he fell unconscious. A Japanese bullet pierced his torso, leaving chest and back scars that his little daughter would later stare at during summers on the lake.

Back from the war he penned an eloquent recollection of his time in combat. He also married a young woman who was, herself, of distinguished New England heritage, and who converted from nonbelief to Episcopalianism at his urging.

Studying partly at Union Theological Seminary in New York, Moore encountered Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich. The Niebuhrs attended the Moores' wedding, Mrs. Moore having taken classes from Ursula Niebuhr. She suggested that her new Republican husband would not be harmed by exposure to the "liberal slant" at Union, but Paul Moore was skeptical about postwar plans for peace:

"There is no permanent value in building more and more economic, diplomatic, social, and political cages for the lion or human beast," he wrote. "Rather, he's got to be trained from the inside out, then the cages are immaterial. So—let the diplomats and hotshots decide their treaties."

He preferred another solution: "Our job, as Christians, is to think and pray like hell so that God can someday enter the lion's heart."

While at seminary, Paul Moore had his first full-fledged affair with another man, who also was married. Paul and his wife begin to see psychiatrists. But they were both committed to the church: His first parish was in a rough neighborhood of Jersey City where *On the Waterfront* would later be filmed. The Moores immersed themselves in helping the poor and befriended Dorothy Day of *The Catholic Worker*. Their dinner table was regularly filled with clergy, intellectuals, and activists of different races discussing the great issues of the postwar world.

Later the Moores served at a mission church in New York before Paul was appointed cathedral dean in Indianapolis, where he attempted to integrate the congregation amid much resistance from the vestry—except for the pharmaceutical mogul Eli Lilly, who was fully supportive. Moore belonged to the NAACP and Planned Parenthood and was by now an enthusiastic social liberal.

"I saw Jesus Christ in the faces of the poor," he explained. His friends now included Catholics and Jews who voted Democratic and subscribed to the *New*

Mark Tooley, president of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, is the author of Taking Back the United Methodist Church.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

York Times as a corrective to the conservative Indianapolis press. The Moores, who had withdrawn from the New York Social Register, shunned a country club that excluded Jews and an amusement park that forbade blacks.

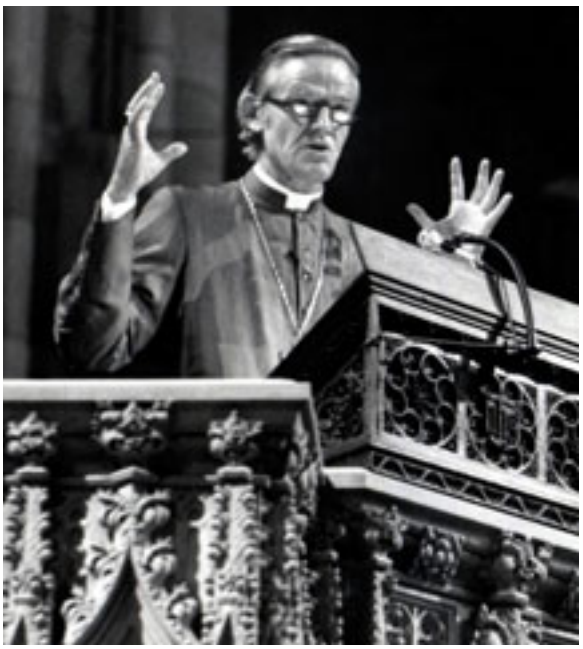
When Paul was elected suffragan bishop in Washington, the Moores excitedly moved to the nation's capital, where they already had many friends, including John F. Kennedy and his national security adviser, McGeorge Bundy, Cord Meyer of the CIA, and Benjamin Bradlee of the *Washington Post*. The Reverend Moore was consecrated as Bishop Moore amid much fanfare at the National Cathedral, and crowds afterwards surrounded him, one man kissing his ring.

Honor, by now in college, noticed a new solemnity as people addressed her as a bishop's daughter. The Moores lived in a big Cleveland Park house, even while ministering to the poor, but were almost relieved to learn that they ranked on a "very low rung" of the Washington social ladder, on a par with the "low judiciary."

Bishop Moore was invited to co-chair a clerical organization called the Coalition of Conscience to push for social justice in Washington, D.C. Moore traveled to Mississippi to register black voters and addressed 15,000 civil rights demonstrators across the street from the White House. Moore threw away his prepared text: "The bodies of white men may be at liberty, but to the extent of their prejudice, their souls are in chains," he exclaimed. "The bodies of Negro Americans are in chains, but those who are in the movement are the freest men in the world, for their souls are free." According to *Newsweek* the suffragan bishop of Washington was "a leader of the new breed" of clergy.

Meanwhile, Honor Moore went to Radcliffe, where she lost her virginity to a Harvard undergraduate she thought would marry her. The bishop told her that premarital sex is unwise, but he did not call it sinful, which left her with "freedom and confusion." A counselor at Radcliffe advised that promiscuity means 10 or more sexual partners, and Honor vowed to reach the ceiling, bedding a series of aspiring artists and philosophers, and undergoing an abortion. She raised funds for the Black Panthers and joined a women's consciousness-raising group. Her mother wrote a memoir of their life in Jersey City, appeared on the *Today* show, posed for *Life*, campaigned for her friend Eugene McCarthy, and was gassed at the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago.

In 1969 Moore became bishop of New York, where he was welcomed by a dinner party hosted by his fellow Episcopalian, Mayor John Lindsay, and took up residence next door to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. He and his wife agreed to an open marriage, but Mrs. Moore soon died of colon cancer. Honor Moore later learned that her mother had discerned her husband's bisexuality very gradually, over the years, but had never confronted him. Paul Moore was soon remarried to a Virginia widow.



Paul Moore in the pulpit, 1972

LIBRADO ROMERO / THE NEW YORK TIMES

In the mid-1970s Honor embarked on a series of lesbian romances, the first with an ex-nun. At about the same time (1977) her father ordained the Episcopal Church's first openly lesbian priest. His fellow bishops declined to censure him. His retirement as bishop was prompted by his second wife's discovery of his secret bisexual life, forcing him to confess (partially) to his children. Honor told him that she felt betrayed by his deception, and he angrily accused her of hypocrisy because of her own status as a lesbian. Later, after a priest alleged sexual harassment, Moore was quietly inhibited from ecclesial duties.

The second Mrs. Moore drank herself to death, but the ex-bishop led an active retirement, speaking and traveling. When the United States invaded Iraq in 2003, he returned to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and thundered from the pulpit: "What kind of Christian is a man who prays alone in the White House before proceeding with a war that millions across the earth of all faiths have protested?"

When confronted by his imminent death from cancer, Honor Moore asked her father about an afterlife. "I don't know," he responded. "I think I'll just go to sleep." And then added: "No one has really come back from the afterlife."

"No one except Jesus," she said, to which the bishop replied: "And he was a little, maybe a little, nuts."

After his funeral Honor Moore visited her father's female lovers, and at least one male lover. She herself has reverted to heterosexuality, but professes to honor her father's legacy, linking it to the 2003 consecration of Gene Robinson, the Episcopal Church's first openly homosexual bishop.

Apparently neither Honor nor any of her eight siblings have themselves joined any church, and her father's decades of duplicity—which seem to have sent one wife to an asylum and another to death from alcoholism—combined with a sanctimonious political "activism," do not paint a pretty picture. But Honor Moore claims that the writing of *The Bishop's Daughter* was therapeutic, after decades of psychiatric care, and the reader can only hope that it was helpful. It certainly is painfully honest. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"In dozens of pages of dispassionate legal prose, the methods approved by the Bush administration for extracting information from senior operatives of Al Qaeda are spelled out in careful detail—like keeping detainees awake for up to 11 straight days, placing them in a dark, cramped box or putting insects into the box to exploit their fears."

—New York Times, *April 17, 2009*

York Times

...now in and there's all that hot... global warming, but does anyone who matters really care at all what the weather is if there is no *Times* to report on it?

...AY, APRIL 29, 2009 ONE DOLLAR...BUYS THE WHOLE COMPANY!

OBAMA OUTLINES NEW GUIDELINES FOR CIA INTERROGATION TACTICS

Suspects Allowed Minimum Eight Hours Sleep

By MARK MAZZETTI and SCOTT SHANE

WASHINGTON — Addressing members of the intelligence community at the White House yesterday, President Barack Obama outlined a new set of counterterrorism guidelines that would better reflect "the values and beliefs of the American people." As a result, tactics such as waterboarding and sleep deprivation have been replaced by tickling, overeating, oversleeping, and watching television until boredom sets in.

"Democracy must reject the false choice between our security and our ideals, between good and evil, between the agony and the ecstasy," explained the president. "Now I know some of you have engaged in interrogation tactics meant to induce fear. But I ask you to imagine the power of laughter. A feather to one's foot may be just as effective as water on one's head." Mr. Obama also assured skeptics in the audience that they would not be prosecuted for past actions he considers to be torture. "I will not prosecute you. At least not me personally."

For the past week, the new interrogation guidelines have been implemented at high security facilities in the United States and at Guantánamo. One suspect, whose identity remains classified, has already confessed his role in terror attacks after sleeping in until noon. "No one woke me up, no cold water on the face. I suddenly hear birds chirping, the sun is overhead, I am confused. What time is it? I have slept too much and now I have a headache. Make it stop!" he said. Another accused terrorist agreed to cooperate with authorities after claiming to be "bored almost to death": "I was excited when told I could watch TV. But the only thing on was the last two seasons of 'E.R.' Where is George Clooney? Where is Anthony Edwards? Why is John Stamos here? This show went on far too long."

Mike Matus for Worldwide Image

Prisoner cells at Guantánamo now include Heavenly® beds by Westin.

Still, Democrats on Capitol Hill questioned the severity of some of the new tactics, such as overeating and tickling. "I've been told one prisoner's meals came strictly from Dairy Queen. That's just not right," said Senator Harry Reid of Nevada. The majority leader added, "And telling someone you are going to get tickled to death, well, that would just be a horrible way to

Continued on Page A13

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED